

*Sandoz Pratt*







Presented by Pascal Paoli Pratt  
to Louise McLeod

Compliments of  
Pascal P. Pratt  
Buffalo N.Y.









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SKETCH OF THE LIFE  
OF  
SAMUEL F. PRATT

WITH  
SOME ACCOUNT OF THE EARLY HISTORY  
OF THE PRATT FAMILY.

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*A PAPER READ BEFORE THE BUFFALO HISTORICAL SOCIETY,  
MARCH 10th, 1873.*

By WILLIAM P. LETCHWORTH.

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## INTRODUCTORY.

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*Mr. President and Gentlemen :*

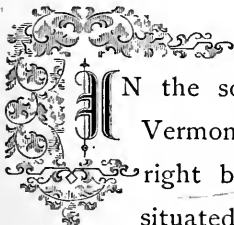
IN acceding to the request of the Buffalo Historical Society to prepare the paper which I am about to submit, I desire to have it understood at the outset, that I have not attempted a perfect delineation or even a full outline of the character of the late SAMUEL F. PRATT.

What I have attempted to do, has been to rescue from forgetfulness some of the interesting incidents relating to the antecedent history of his family, to bring before you such facts relating to him as have come to my knowledge, and certain events of his time which may have influenced in some degree the formation of his character, and also to show my personal relations with him, explaining thereby how I, for one, came so to love this man. It were exceedingly presumptuous in me, to endeavor to give a complete picture of him. Such a task requires a

bolder hand and a more delicate touch than mine. In view of the intimate connection of Oliver G. Steele, Esq., with the deceased in one of the important institutions of our city, the Buffalo Gas Light Company, I have asked him to give a history of the labors of his associate in that field, and his impressions of him founded upon that experience. Your attention is directed to his valuable sketch accompanying this. The brightest and fairest side of my subject, his Christian character, has been already eloquently illustrated in his funeral obsequies by the Rev. Dr. A. T. Chester. The various organizations with which he has been connected have borne fitting testimonials to his distinguished worth as a man and a citizen in resolutions which have appeared in the city press. It is therefore unnecessary and I shall not endeavor to add to, or re-color, what has been so judiciously and faithfully treated by others. If it shall be found that I have furnished any material of value to the historian who shall hereafter undertake to perfect a biography of this Christian gentleman, my aim will be attained.

# SAMUEL F. PRATT

## *AND THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE PRATT FAMILY.*



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IN the south-eastern part of the State of Vermont, in Windham county, on the right bank of the Connecticut River, is situated upon an elevated table of about a mile in extent, the delightful little town of Westminster—a place of some historic note. In the olden time, courts of justice and several sessions of the legislature were held there. The traveler reaches it by the Vermont Valley Railroad which passes through it. It is a salubrious spot, sheltered upon the north-west by the famous Green Mountains which rise grandly into the sky upon that quarter. This pleasant village at the beginning of the present century was the home of the Pratts. Among the hills south-

westerly, on a tributary of the Connecticut River, is located the neighboring village of Townshend—a quiet hamlet secluded from the noisy world. Here, on the 28th of May, 1807, the subject of this sketch was born.

The father of Samuel Fletcher Pratt was Samuel Pratt, Junior. He was the eldest son of Captain

*Samuel Pratt*  


Samuel Pratt, who had ten children, five sons and five daughters. His

wife's maiden name was Esther Wells, of Hatfield, Mass. Three of their daughters are still living, all residents of this city—Esther, now Mrs. Augustus C. Fox; Mary, now Mrs. George Burt; and Marilla, now Mrs. Orlando Allen. Captain Samuel Pratt was a son of Aaron Pratt, who, prior to the year 1800, removed from East Hartford, Conn., to the neighborhood of Westminster, where he resided on a farm. The Westminster Pratts and the Prattville Pratts, including the family of the Honorable Zadock Pratt, hold kinship.

As it is conceded that character is not the outgrowth of a single life, but is formed by the attendant circumstances which soften or harden, weaken or strengthen successive generations, I believe it to be relevant to our purpose, in fact necessary to a true conception of the character we are now considering, to contemplate the genealogical tree of this family and show through what storms or sunshine it has passed and in what soil its roots derived their nourishment. The oak that grows upon the upland slope, exposed on all sides to the sun and doomed to struggle, with its long knotty arms, against the winter blast, after many seasons of exposure has greater strength and tougher fiber than that which springs up among the moist dews and out of the rich soil of the cool shady forest. Not only does it grow tougher and stronger, but loftier and grander in exposed situations, as though it fed upon the very storms that strove to rend it. There are some natures which seem to attain greater development in battling with the opposing forces of the world..

“The tannen grows  
Loftiest, on loftiest and least sheltered rocks,  
Rooted in barrenness, where naught below  
Of soil supports them 'gainst the Alpine shocks  
Of eddy storms; yet springs the trunk and mocks  
The howling tempest, till its height and frame  
Are worthy of the mountain from whose blocks  
Of bleak gray granite unto life it came  
And grew a giant tree;—the mind may grow the same.”

In 1801, Captain Samuel Pratt, inspired partly with a spirit of adventure and partly with that daring enterprise common to the early pioneers of our country, determined upon making a long expedition into the almost savage wilderness of the Far West. He accordingly left his home in Westminster and proceeded to Montreal, and there made preliminary arrangements for entering upon his project the following year.

In 1802 he gathered about him a few fearless spirits like himself and set forth, leaving at home a large and interesting family of children in charge of a devoted Christian mother.

In Montreal he made purchase of such articles as were necessary to complete his outfit, and made such other arrangements as were required for so long and



perilous a journey. His merchandise consisted of such articles as were easily transported and best adapted to barter with the Indians. The course of Captain Pratt's party from Montreal was up the St. Lawrence, along the south shore of Lake Ontario and up the Niagara River to Lewiston, thence by portage around the Falls of Niagara, and up the Niagara River to Fort Erie. From this point they coasted along the north shore of Lake Erie and extended the expedition as far as Mackinaw, exchanging goods for furs, as opportunity offered, with the Indians. In view of a lurking animosity existing between different Indian tribes, their then untamed spirit and migratory habits, and also, the small number comprising the party which guarded its valuables, the expedition was full of hazard. Captain Pratt, however, was well qualified, mentally and physically, for such an undertaking. He was cautious, courageous, and a man of firmness and decision, frank in his manners, a shrewd judge of human nature, and imbued with a strong sense of right, manifesting itself in his address, which tended to inspire confidence in his intercourse with strangers. He was in person broad-shouldered, thick-

set and stout, capable of enduring the fatigue and hardships attendant upon each day of their journey. No startling tale of blood or treachery has come down to us as part of the experience of this little band of "Green Mountain Boys" threading pathless Western wilds, or laboriously coasting along the silent waters now whitened with the grain-laden fleets of the West. Having reached the farthest limit of their journey, they turned back and coasted along the south shore of Lake Erie.

In the fall of 1803, near Sandusky, Captain Pratt had the misfortune to be taken down with the small-pox, and found himself helplessly prostrated by this terrible scourge. His companions, either overcome with fear or regarding his case as hopeless, left him in the wilderness among the Indians. Separated from his race and kindred and the precious comforts of a white man's fireside, he nevertheless found himself not destitute of friends. His needs and suffering called out in these children of nature those higher traits of humanity which prove the likeness of man to his Creator. As in the case of Mungo Park dying with hunger and thirst in the wilds of Africa, so

here the angel of deliverance was a woman. A squaw attended him and nursed him faithfully through this loathsome disease, although at one time he was sick unto death. No hospital of charity ordained under the teachings of the Christian Church could have enfolded him with greater care than did those ministrations of tenderness by the children of the forest, taught by the "Great Spirit" who has given the same soul to the red man as to the white.

After recovering he made his way to Erie, where he found Mr. Reed, who had located there, and with whom he entered into an arrangement to act as an agent in purchasing furs. From thence on his way home he passed the site of Buffalo, then but a cluster of log cabins, grouped near the present location of the Mansion House. Reaching home he was received by his family as one risen from the dead. They had not heard from him during his long absence, and had given up expectations of ever seeing him again. The furs secured upon this trip he marketed in Boston, after his return.

Among the few buildings here at the time of Captain Pratt's first visit, was a log tavern, kept by

John Crow, which stood on the south side of Crow street, now Exchange street, near Onondaga street, now Washington street; Crow street then terminating in Onondaga street. A double lodge, facing Little Buffalo Creek (now Hamburg Canal), was located near where is now the north-east corner of Washington and Exchange streets, and occupied by a German named Middaugh, and his son-in-law, Ezekiel Lane. Middaugh was originally from the Mohawk country, and came here from Canada. Another log house, near this, but southerly, was occupied by Johnson, an Indian interpreter; and a negro named Black Joe occupied a log house on Little Buffalo Creek, east side of Main street. The surveyors of the Holland Land Company, under the direction of Joseph Ellicott,\* had nearly completed the plotting

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\*When the Holland Land Company had secured the title to the site of Buffalo, their agent wrote to the Dutch Minister at Washington to select some person competent to lay out their lands for them. He was referred to Andrew Ellicott, first Surveyor-General of the United States, a brother of Joseph Ellicott, who had been assisting George Washington in the laying out of the National Capital. Andrew Ellicott told the Dutch Minister that he had a brother whom he could recommend for the place if they could make a bargain. A bargain was made, and thus Joseph Ellicott came to lay out the city of

of a village here which it was proposed to call New Amsterdam. No village lots had at that time been offered for sale.

Captain Pratt's mind at that early date comprehended the advantages of the little village, and his observations in his explorations on the lakes West had convinced him that this was to be the future outlet of a large commerce. This intuitive insight into the future, comprehending hidden resources and the advantages of undeveloped enterprises, has been the fortunate inheritance of his descendants. The meagre appearance of Buffalo at that time must have presented a striking contrast to its present thrift, and the change seems miraculous when we think that it all has transpired within the three-score and ten years of a single life. Captain Pratt at this time determined to cast his lot here. In the following year he sold out his village store and closed up his affairs in

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Buffalo, and held the important position of agent of that famous land corporation, an office ever faithfully filled by him. From this circumstance may be attributed a similarity in some respects in style, in the plans of Washington and Buffalo. The original names of very many of the streets have been changed from three-ply, double and twisted unpronounceables, to more simple modern ones.

Westminster and set out with his family in the summer of 1804, on their tedious journey for Buffalo. His friends looked upon the project of his taking his family into the wilderness and establishing a business there as chimerical in the extreme, and were not slow to prophesy every imaginable disaster. This did not, however, in the least degree weaken his dauntless determination. Truly it was a bold scheme, showing a strong faith in the future of Buffalo and the West, and equal confidence in his own far-sighted judgment. It would seem, however, that this conclusion was not arrived at without previous premeditation and fireside talks in the home circle. One of the daughters of Captain Pratt recollects, when she was a little girl, of hearing her negro nurse sing a lullaby song in the refrain of which occurred the words:

"To the Genesee, to the Genesee;  
We're all going to the Genesee."

All the country in New York west of the Genesee was designated by New Englanders at that time as the "Genesee country." His goods and household effects were packed in two wagons, such as emigrants

at the time used, and from the white arched covers of which might be seen peeping out the ruddy face of a domestic, or the happy countenance of a juvenile Pratt, excited with the novelty of the situation and all unconscious of the hardships awaiting them in their new home. Mrs. Pratt with the more delicate members of the household occupied the family carriage, a stately vehicle, hung upon high leathern springs. It had seats for four inside and a driver's seat in front, nevertheless there was not sufficient accommodation for all its occupants, and the smaller children took their turn at standing up, one at a time. Could we see it now, it would amuse us by its quaintness, but then it was such a grand affair as to inspire the gaping backwoodsmen with a mingled feeling of awe and envy. Deacon Johnson, a noted landlord at Cayuga Bridge, looked upon it with especial interest, regarding its advent as marking a new era in the history of the country, and asserting that it was the first private coach that had passed westward on this great highway. As it, with its accompanying train, rumbled across the long new wooden causeway of Cayuga Bridge, the glad waves dancing

to the right and left, its occupants must have been inspired with new enthusiasm at such a generous unfolding of natural beauties in the land to which they were tending.

It seems a noteworthy reflection that the rough highway traveled by the Pratts upon their advent into this country, and along which the early emigration from the Eastern States came into this region, was also, centuries previous, and long before a white man had ever set foot within the boundaries of this State, what might almost be called the "Appian Way" of an empire. It was upon the line of the Indian trail which linked together the various villages of the nations of the "Iroquois League," and along its well-worn course long files of Indian warriors, for unknown time, had taken up their march, gathering together, from village to village, their impetuous bands, as they formed their expeditions of conquest against the far-distant Cherokees of the South, or the more warlike tribes west of the Mississippi; and along the same trail they returned, bringing their captives and spoils. Later, along the same track, followed the slowly toiling emigrant trains of white



covered wagons. Then came the four-horse coach, rattling forward in a cloud of dust, its approach heralded by blasts proudly flourished from the driver's tin horn. And now, along the same ancient highway, with some little shortenings, are laid rails of steel, upon which, in breathless speed, pass millions of people and immeasurable quantities of all the products of the earth, this route still remaining, as centuries ago, the great highway between the East and West.

The party having arrived at Batavia, Mrs. Pratt felt that she had entered an unknown land, out of which had come tales of strife and bloodshed that had filled the evening firesides of her girlhood with terror. The road from here was mostly but a wagon-track through the woods. Rude attempts had been made to repair bog-holes in the swamps by bits of corduroy track. The road, if such it may be called, was filled with holes and was dangerous, besides being very uncomfortable. To calm Mrs. Pratt's apprehensions and prevent the possibility of frequent upsettings of the family coach, Captain Pratt engaged at Batavia the services of a party of woodsmen, or hunters, who attended the carriage on either side as

an escort, and thus the party proceeded through the dim, overarching woods, under the lofty trees of the primeval forest. The horses were floundering at times in mud and mire to their bellies, and the wheels and axles were frequently submerged. They made but about twelve miles a day. The last night of their journey they were obliged to camp in the woods. The horses got astray during the night, and it was thought they had been stolen by prowling Indians. It was almost high noon of the next day before they were rejoiced by the finding of their teams and were able to proceed on their eventful journey. They reached here in the month of September, 1804, entering Buffalo by the Williamsville road and coming down Main street to the Terrace, the emigrant wagons being preceded by the old family coach. The first glimpse obtained of the lake was from an opening or small clearing in the woods at the junction of High street with Main.

Main street was not even fenced in. It was filled with stumps, and only here and there on the present site of Buffalo were patches of clearing. Altogether there were not a dozen houses, and only a few of

these were framed, the rest being made of logs.\* There was merely a path, or wagon track, down the river to Black Rock. Only a few of the principal streets were marked out. The Terrace (opposite Pratt & Co.'s store) was an opening and commanded a full view of the lake. It was covered with green turf, and was a favorite sporting place and playground of the Indians.

Imagine the feelings of the various members of this travel-worn party, arrived at their journey's end, and emerging upon the Terrace on a summer evening in early September, their cheeks fanned for the first time by the cool breezes of our majestic lake, while their eyes wonderingly roamed over its broad expanse of blue stretching away beyond the utmost limit of sight. Who can tell what broad and hope-inspired visions of the growth and prosperity of a municipality warmed that man's heart as he pictured vast business enterprises impelled by the energies of himself and his descendants in the opening future, together with

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\*Some authorities state, that at this period there was not a frame building in the place, and that Captain Pratt subsequently erected the first frame house ever built in Buffalo.

the homes of comfort secured for them and him in his declining years! Could that veil which obscured the future have been momentarily raised, and could he have seen the smoke from furnaces, mills, forges and factories blackening the sky upon the north; could he have seen the floating palaces glide in and out of our harbor; the iron roads with their smoking steeds; the thousand industrial enterprises; the institutions of education, of science, art and charity; the temples of worship, as well as the beautiful fields of green melting into shady groves, drives, walks and glassy lakes, all of which are linked with the name of those who are directly descended from him, would he not have felt his vision more than realized, and his heart throb with passionate enthusiasm? What shadowy forebodings and doubts may have crossed that mother's thought, as in her anxious solicitude for her loved ones, she pictured discomfort, suffering and sickness in the barrenness of a pioneer's dwelling, and the possibility of evil associations about her children. May she not have looked back to that well appointed New England home, amid congenial society, with an unuttered pang of regret?

In the old family carriage that passed down Main street sixty-nine years ago were the following persons:

Mrs. Captain Pratt, aged thirty-eight.

A young lady named Miss Polly Smith, a niece of Captain Pratt, afterwards Mrs. Hiram Hanchett. She carried little Mary, who was two years old, in her lap.

Permelia Pratt, aged twelve, afterwards Mrs. Elijah Leech.

Benjamin Wells Pratt, aged eight.

Esther Pratt, aged six.

Hiram Pratt, aged four.

In the other conveyances, a greater portion of the time, were:

Captain Pratt, aged forty. His sons,

Asa Pratt, aged sixteen, and

Pascal Paoli, aged ten.

Their daughter Lucy Ann, subsequently drowned in Buffalo Creek,\* and Marilla, now the wife of Hon. Orlando Allen, were born here. Captain Pratt's eldest son, Samuel, the father of Samuel F. Pratt, did not emigrate with his parents at this time. He

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\* See Appendix A.

was then a young man of seventeen, and held a position of clerk in a Mr. Bigelow's store in Townshend. He probably had good reasons for practicing the self-denial he did in thus separating himself from his father's family, for he subsequently found companionship for life with one of the best and noblest of her sex.

Captain Pratt brought with him a young man by the name of George Keith, a cabinet-maker, whose Yankee industry was not long in applying itself to work. There is still in existence a half round table and a bureau made by this young man. They were the first pieces of furniture ever manufactured in Buffalo. They were made from black walnut cut in the vicinity, and are curiously inlaid with different kinds of wood. They survived the burning of Buffalo, and are now in the possession of the children of Captain Pratt, the first being preserved by Mrs. Burt, the latter by Mrs. Fox. At the Old Folks' Festival, held in Buffalo, at American Hall, February 23d, 1864, Mr. Guy H. Salisbury read a poem from this table.

The arrival of so large a party upon that summer evening called out all of the few inhabitants of the

place, of every age and sex, who gathered in eager curiosity about the group, as they disembarked among the stumps in front of Crow's log tavern. The habitual reserve of the Indians, and scorn at the betrayal of curiosity, were in this instance in some degree overcome, and they and their squaws with papooses upon their backs inspected the carriage, uttering ejaculations of surprise. But for the ready courtesy of Erastus Granger, Superintendent of Indian



Affairs, who made his quarters at this rude place of entertainment, and whose kindly instincts comprehended at once the embarrassment of their situation, the unexpected influx of so many might have resulted in their great discomfort. He occupied one of the two large square rooms of the log tavern, and offered it to Captain Pratt, for the use

of his family, until they could be elsewhere accommodated. The finish of the room within was the same as that of the house without, that is, of logs chinked and plastered between with clay. The fire-place consisted simply of a stone hearth and stone back; the floor was made of split logs, smoothed with a draw-shave; the beds were supplied with Indian blankets in place of quilts. A profusion of compliments passed between the bestower and recipient of this hospitality. Little Esther, looking about the scantily furnished apartment and up into her mother's face, where she saw the tears creeping down her cheeks, thought that both her father and Mr. Granger were unnecessarily prodigal in their politeness. The table was soon spread with a profuse supper of game,\* supplied from the surrounding forest, of which the travelers partook heartily, and soon all but Captain Pratt and Mr. Granger, who retired later, were in a sound sleep, induced by

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\* Deer, ducks, wild turkeys and other game were abundant at this time; and when roasted before a log fire, in an old-fashioned tin oven, we have authority now living who can testify to their extreme deliciousness.



their recent fatigues and the consciousness of their long journey having ended. Thus passed peacefully the first night of the Pratts in Buffalo.

Subsequently a log cabin was improvised upon the Terrace, and the family of seven children huddled into it in great discomfort, the most important piece of furniture in the domicile being a huge chest. A small store building was soon completed, in which Captain Pratt placed his goods temporarily, while a larger one was being constructed. His first store was on the north side of Exchange street.

It was but a few days after his arrival that Captain Pratt addressed the following letter to Joseph Ellicott,\* agent of the Holland Land Company, in reply to one he had already received from him, the Captain having previously made application for Lots Nos. 2 and 37 :

NEW AMSTERDAM, *September 12, 1804.*

*Dear Sir :* I received your polite letter of the seventh of September, informing me that I might commence building

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\* Other letters written by Captain Pratt to Mr. Ellicott, having relation to the early history of Buffalo, and his connection therewith, will be found in Appendix B.

on Lot No. 37 and No. 2. I therefore wish you to consider the above lots as sold to me, and I shall commence building on one of them as soon as possible. Mr. Jones, the bearer of this letter, will hand you in gold \$30.45, in three pieces, which I wish you to place to my credit till I see you.

Believe me respectfully your friend and humble servant,

SAMUEL PRATT.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, Esq., Batavia.

Captain Pratt at once located himself upon Inner Lot No. 2, on the south-east corner of Main and Exchange streets. This lot is marked upon the books of the Holland Land Company to Samuel Pratt, under date of September 7th, 1804, the same date of Mr. Ellicott's letter referred to by Mr. Pratt. No record is made of any conveyance at that early date. The deed from them dates April 20th, 1807, and conveys 81-100 acres, corner of Willink avenue and Crow street—consideration one hundred and fifty dollars. The names of the grantors in the instrument are as follows :

Wilhem Willink.

Pieter Van Eeghen.

Hendrick Vollenhoven.

Rutger Jan Schemmelpenninck.

Wilhem Willink the younger.

Jan Willink the younger, son of Jan.

Jan Gabriel Van Staphorst.

Cornelius Vollenhoven.

Hendrick Seye.

By their Attorney,

JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

It was customary at that period for the Holland Land Company to first book the names of applicants for land, which was equivalent to a refusal of it; subsequently, at convenience, to give the buyer an article or contract, and finally a deed. This piece of land extended from Main half way to the line of Washington street, and from Exchange street to Little Buffalo Creek (now Hamburgh Canal). Here at the edge of the Terrace, on Main street, was quite a declivity, where the boys in winter had fine times sliding down hill upon their sleds. Samuel F. Pratt once informed me that such was a part of his boyish experience. With characteristic energy, Captain Pratt set about building him a house. George

Keith the cabinet-maker, Indians and others assisted in the task. It was completed in a short space of time, considering the circumstances. He also built a store, which, as well as the house, occupied the site of the present Mansion House. The store was finished first. While it was being built he temporarily occupied as a place of business a small frame building on the north side of Crow street, nearly opposite his new buildings. There was a small yard between the store and the house, the former building facing on Exchange street. The mansion was L shaped, one wing extending along Main, and having entrance doors on both Main and Exchange streets. It was a large two and a half story frame structure. The family moved into it the following summer. This was the first frame house of any considerable dimensions that was built in Buffalo. He also built subsequently a large storehouse and barn on property of which he had a refusal or contract on Ellicott street, corner of Seneca, and which he used principally for storing, packing and pressing furs. It contained presses for this purpose. These improvements, humble as they now seem, were imposing at the time,

and were really the first important ones made here. They were conceived in a spirit of boldness, executed with énérgy and were the initial point of business development in the place. There had been some small trade in the way of blankets and Indian trinkets carried on by different parties at periods prior to Captain Pratt's advent; but nothing that partook of the character of established mercantile business. He came here, not as an adventurer, but with fixed ideas of citizenship, bringing with him his household goods and gods. Among other improvements made upon his lot, was one relating to Black Joe, previously spoken of. He had squatted upon the creek end of Lot No. 2 previous to Captain Pratt's arrival, and before the village had been surveyed. Joe was a roystering fellow, kept late hours and made his cabin especially attractive to the devotees of Bacchus and the Terpsichorean art. The Captain was not long in recommending Joe to either keep a more orderly house or take up quarters more distant from his home. The recommendation was not acted upon, however, with the promptness that Captain Pratt, as well as other good neighbors,

including the Landons, desired, and in 1809 his cabin was summarily demolished by the villagers.

While constructing his buildings it became necessary for him to provide for cooking the meals of the workmen. The crowded condition of the family cabin would not permit this to be done within. The meat was accordingly boiled in a huge kettle out of doors, the kettle being hung over a fire between two upright forked sticks, and suspended upon a cross-bar. One day an Indian, bearing the inquisitive cognomen of Peter Gimlet, stole the meat as it was boiling for dinner. Little Esther detected the hungry rogue in the act. She saw him thrust into the iron pot a stick, hooked at the end, withdraw a huge piece of meat, swing it over his shoulder and make off with it. All in a flurry she ran for her father, exclaiming, "Peter Gimlet has stole the meat!" Captain Pratt dispatched Asa after the thief, who duly arrested and brought him back. The Captain's ire being justly aroused, he administered to the culprit without delay a good thrashing with his riding whip. This indignity, it was assumed, wounded the sensitive Peter's honor more than his person. When

released, he fled away at a long, loping gait, uttering at regular intervals doleful yells, which were heard and reiterated by other Indians in the distance, until the sounds were carried far away, from village to village, upon Buffalo Creek. It was not long before the Indians commenced gathering in front of the store building. They settled themselves upon their haunches in semi-circular rows among the stumps and little bushes which nearly covered the space. A vast concourse thus assembled, including noted chiefs and sachems, among whom was Farmer's Brother. Their appearance was quite picturesque, but their sudden gathering created feelings of great apprehension on the part of the family. A profound silence at length prevailed, when, the meat thief being present, Farmer's Brother stood up and charged the Captain, who had walked boldly among them, with inflicting a great indignity and injury upon one of his people. The Captain, through the interpreter, Jack Johnston, charged upon Peter the theft of his meat, proved the act by his little daughter, explained the laws of the white people relating to such acts, and concluded by appealing to Farmer's Brother to

say what *they* would do with "*so mean a man.*" The explanation was satisfactory. The Council decided against the thief. Farmer's Brother said Ho-da-ni-dá-oh\* was a good man; Indian stole meat; Indian get whipped; Indian deserved to be whipped; if he was not whipped enough, Ho-da-ni-dá-oh might whip him more. After further consultation, Farmer's Brother made the culprit stand before him while he administered a rebuke, setting forth the shamefulness of his conduct, and then banished him for a term of years. The Captain did not see Peter Gimlet's face again for some four or five years.

Captain Pratt was sufficiently familiar with Indian customs to know that this improvised council would look for something in the nature of a benefice. At its conclusion, he rolled out a barrel of salt, which was taken away in handfuls to the last morsel. All seemed satisfied that Ho-da-ni-dá-oh was a good man, and were probably glad, on the whole, in view of the scarcity of salt, that the circumstance had

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\* Ho-da-ni-dá-oh was the name given by the Indians to Captain Pratt. Translated from the Seneca tongue into English it would signify: he is merciful, kind or liberal.



happened. The family, at all events, were greatly relieved when this strange assembly had dispersed.

After completing his new store, Captain Pratt filled it with a stock of goods suited to the wants of the primitive people about him, nearly all his business being in barter with the Indians for furs. He procured his goods mostly from Samuel May, a man of wealth in Boston, who had at one time an interest with him, and who marketed the furs thus obtained on joint account in Europe.

After he had finished his house, he endeavored to furnish it as comfortably as the difficulties of doing so in those times would admit. Among other comforts, if not luxuries for that day, he spread upon its floors a carpet from Boston, which was the first one laid in the place. The mode of getting his goods here was by sloop to Albany; thence up the Mohawk and down Fish Creek to Oneida Lake; thence down the Oswego River to Lake Ontario; thence by lake and Niagara River to Lewiston; thence to Fort Schlosser by portage around the Falls of Niagara, and up the Niagara River to Buffalo. After the main State turnpike was made a good

road, his goods were brought by what were called Canastota wagons, drawn by from five to seven horses. These were generally arranged three at the wheel, a double team in advance and one leader. The driver rode the near wheel horse, and guided the leader with a single rein. The wagons were covered with white canvas stretched over bows, and the wheels had tires six to eight inches in breadth. The teams came all the way through from Albany, occupying from twenty-eight to thirty days on the trip, although the time varied somewhat according to the state of the roads. Hon. Orlando Allen has seen trains of these teams coming into Buffalo numbering twenty-eight in the train.

Captain Pratt was an off-hand, liberal trader, and had the faculty of keeping his customers in good humor, even while carrying his point. As an illustration of this, beaver furs which were bought by weight were sometimes brought in for sale by Indians who had cunningly filled the claws of the skins with lead. To have discovered the cheat would have been an unpardonable offense, and would have resulted besides in the loss of a good customer.

Captain Pratt, matching his shrewdness against their cunning, in apparent unconsciousness of their trickery, would cut off the claws and cast them aside, making at the same time a liberal allowance for what would have been their value minus the lead.

In justice to the Indians it must be said that in those days they were tolerably reliable in their dealings, probably on the whole as much so as white people, and prided themselves upon keeping their word. Captain Pratt, confiding in his keen knowledge of human nature, would frequently give credit to Indians living as far off as Allegany, to considerable amounts. If the debtor died, the nearest relative has been known to come and pay the debt, upon the theory that the spirit of the dead could not rest until the promise made had been fulfilled. He was very popular among them, and enjoyed their fullest confidence.

The government paid off its dues to certain of the Indians here, in those days, they being convened at stated periods for this purpose. At such times very large numbers congregated in the then little hamlet or village. They remained here generally

from one to two weeks, receiving their pay, disposing of their furs, trading and amusing themselves in various ways. The young Indians were very fond of playing ball, and one of the Pratt family tells me that she has seen as many as a hundred young Indians upon the Terrace ground at one time, engaged in their sports, painted and dressed in the simple short skirt or breech clout of the Indian costume. They were also very fond of racing, and made frequent trials of their speed on Main street.

Captain Pratt was in the habit, on these "Paying Off" occasions, of causing his family to vacate a large basement in his capacious house, which he devoted to the exclusive use of the Indians during the time of their stay. This room contained a large old-fashioned fire-place, before which they roasted their pork, cutting it into small pieces and placing it before the fire on sticks. Supplies of both pork and flour were always given them by their liberal entertainer. They made use of their flour by mixing it into a sort of cake, rolling it up in green corn husks, and then baking it in the ashes. Before this fire-place, filled with blazing logs, they would stretch

themselves at night, having previously sickened Mrs. Pratt with the fumes of their "kinnikinnick," or Indian tobacco, made from the leaves and inner bark of a species of sumac, and mixed with a little sweet Seneca grass. This they smoked freely in their pipes, odorizing the whole house during their stay. Mrs. Pratt was a woman of sensitive organization, and the refinements habitual to her early years had tended to unfit her for the hardships and irregularities of pioneer life. She was low in stature and comely in appearance, fair complexioned, and partook somewhat of the English type of womanhood.

Thus thrown into intimate association with the Indians, it was quite natural that this family of young persons should early become familiar with their habits, customs and even language. Asa and Pascal P.\* both acquired it—Pascal P. so as to speak it quite fluently. The latter eventually mastered it so perfectly that speaking behind a door he could not be distinguished from an Indian. He could make himself understood in several different Indian dialects.

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\*See Appendix C.

At the celebrated trial of Tommy Jemmy for killing a witch, Red Jacket conducted the defense, which was remarkable for its eloquence and quick grasp of the strong points in the case. In the course of the trial, he politely asked the court that his friend Pascal P. Pratt be permitted to act as interpreter, "as he understood both languages better than Captain Jones." Captain Horatio Jones was the government interpreter. The request of the Indian orator was granted.

The family were always on good terms with the Indians. Incidents sometimes occurred, however, causing Mrs. Pratt to feel nervously insecure in her isolated life. One day, as they were eating dinner, an infuriated, half-intoxicated Indian, who went by the unenviable title of "Devil's Ramrod," rushed into the dining-room, chasing in advance of him Benjamin Wells Pratt, who was then a lad. The Indian was brandishing his knife, and clutching at the boy to kill him. Benjamin ran under the table, among the feet of those sitting there, and his pursuer was brought to a stand. It seems that Benjamin, with other boys, had been teasing the Indian, and it was found difficult to pacify him ever so little. At

length he said: "Will not kill Ho-da-ni-dá-oh's boy." With these words he turned away, stuck his knife into the door with a terrible thrust, and, leaving it there, strode haughtily out of the room.

Mrs. Fox (Esther Pratt) says: "I took my little sister Lucy Ann, then a baby, into father's store one day, and placed her upon the counter. My attention was directed from her for a moment, and when I turned towards the child I beheld to my horror a Tuscarora squaw come into the door, and, like a flash, catch up my little sister in her blanket and instantly disappear with her. I ran screaming with all my might after her; and brother Asa, who was near by, gave chase, caught her, and with great difficulty succeeded in getting Lucy from her grasp. When questioned as to her motive for stealing the child, she replied that she had just lost her own and wished to possess another."

Many were the stories of savage warfare and the chase that found eager listeners in the younger members of this family, cast by the Providence of God for a time almost beyond the pale of civilized society, and were it not beyond the scope of this

work these pages could be made thrilling by their recital.

In the year 1805, Captain Pratt, feeling assured of the well-being of his family, his thoughts doubtless stimulated in part by the pious sentiments of his wife, turned his attention to the spiritual needs of the crude society in which he was placed. His mind also reverted with a feeling of commendable regard to his old home and parents. Accordingly, in the summer, he made a visit to New England, taking his wife with him. He went on to Boston and returned with the Rev. Mr. Whiting. They also brought their aged father and mother from Westminster. Captain Pratt had induced the Rev. Mr. Whiting to come "West" in the hope of settling him eventually as pastor in the village of New Amsterdam. While here, he not only preached the gospel but taught school. He was the first minister not under the direction of the Missionary Society that labored in this field. This event is especially worthy of note. The bringing of a minister here from Boston under the circumstances was attended with great difficulty and expense, as also was the



providing for him after his reaching here, and nothing but a strong desire for the advancement and well-being of those about them could have prompted this good couple to so generous an act. Rev. Mr. Whiting was a member of the family for a year or two, and was in the habit of thoroughly catechising the children in the good old-fashioned way every Sunday. Aaron Pratt, Captain Pratt's father, did not long survive his migration to the West. He died in 1806, his wife following him about 1809, and both were buried in the village burying-ground, now Franklin Square. They were both members of the Congregational Church, and died in the full faith of the Redeemer. Captain Pratt, though not a church-member, was duly regardful of religious observances and a practical Christian. His wife was a member of the same church as her parents, but afterwards became Baptist in sentiment. She was an exemplary, earnest, Christian mother, faithful in all the duties of the church. She had a warm sympathizer and zealous co-worker in her nearest neighbor, Mrs. Landon. They labored hand in hand for Christ, and the religious influence emanating from these two

earnest women is largely felt to this day in Buffalo. They established in Mrs. Pratt's parlors the first series of evening prayer-meetings ever held in this place, and they were, so to speak, the life, spirit and head of the first beginning of the Presbyterian Church here. The work of this pious mother was not without its beneficial results in her own family. The surviving daughters are all women of unusual kindness of heart and exemplary Christian character.

Up to the time of the burning of Buffalo by the British, the hospitable mansion at the corner of Main and Exchange streets kept open doors to every itinerant minister led hither in the cause of his Master, and these devoted men always found a warm welcome from the host and hostess, which was not withdrawn when the worthy Captain had passed from the scene of his labors.

Not only did Captain Pratt make sacrifices to accommodate the spiritual wants of those about him, but he interested himself in various ways for the public good, looking to the progressive needs of the new community. He went, the first year of his arrival here, with Dr. Cyrenius Chapin to Batavia,

and secured from the Holland Land Company the lot known as Franklin Square for a village burying-ground. He assisted in burying the first person interred in it—a stranger by the name of John Cochrane, from Connecticut, who died at Barker's, on the Terrace.\* When the grave was dug, it became necessary to cut away the scrub oak with axes and clear the ground. Here Captain Pratt himself was buried, as also were his wife, father and mother and other members of his family; and here was also buried, in March, 1815, the distinguished war chief, Farmer's Brother. Mrs. Burt well recollects the expressions of sympathy manifested by the people towards this steadfast friend of the white man, and his burial attended with military honors in the village burying-ground near the grave of her father. She states that at the time of the removal of the remains of her family and others from Franklin Square, she saw excavated a part of his coffin-lid, upon which were marked, in brass nails, the letters

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\* The second person buried in it was an Indian named Infant, and the third person, and first female, Judge Zenas Barker's wife.

"F. B." This was the last relic of that moccasined hero, the nobility of whose deeds and the brightness of whose fame had thrown lustre upon the dusky annals of his race, and shed a saddened light through the dawning of our city's "early time."

It may be remarked incidentally, as a notable coincidence, that in the village burying-ground of Buffalo there should have been laid one of the last representatives of a powerful race now vanished from a region they once made populous, a mighty warrior of the once dreaded Iroquois, a man of giant frame, great in council, great in the field, and one of the very last and chief of those who led the dusky braves of the Senecas to onslaught and victory; and that, almost side by side with him, should have sunk to rest a representative of the Anglo-Saxon conquerors of the earth—one who illustrated in his person the intellectual power, perseverance and endurance of the pale face, a descendant of those New England fathers who have leavened the civilization of a continent—one of the very first of those sturdy, keen-sighted pioneers who saw in advance the mightiness of the West, and followed the star of empire

with an indomitable courage and persistency, before which every obstacle sank—one who, as he came, startled from his path the wild deer from the silent shades of the forest, and who projected here the first enterprises having the character of established business and permanent settlement, which have grown into results surpassing the scope of a fairy tale;—that here, upon the very mold into which these two forms commingled, and out of the granite of the hills from whence this hardy pioneer came, is now rising, stone upon stone, a grand and stately civic palace, to be the seat of the city's municipal power, the center of its radiating growth and the symbol of an advancing civilization. To me, however, these coincidences suggest more than this, and this grand structure looms up a monument, marking one of the dividing epochs in history, around whose base the spent wave of the past is overlapped by the billows of the future, rolling in with a never-ceasing flow upon the shore of time.

In addition to the purchase made by Captain Pratt, corner of Main and Exchange streets, and of the lots bounded by Swan, Ellicott, Seneca and Chicago

streets, he took up some outer lots comprising over one hundred acres on both sides of Buffalo Creek. Upon the other side of the creek and between it and the lake was a large wooded tract. Captain Pratt told Mr. Ellicott at one time that he would like to secure some more of this land. Ellicott replied that "Lake Erie held a mortgage upon a good portion of this tract." His idea was that when it had been cleared up and the stumps had rotted out, the lake would make extensive inroads upon it. This has proved to be the case. The Captain built upon his farm this side of the creek, not far from the site of the present Erie Railroad freight house, a good substantial farm house. This was very tastefully located. It stood at a little distance from the water facing the creek, between which and it extended a grassy lawn. A splendid linden tree of large dimensions stood on the lawn and afforded in summer not only a cooling shade to the family, but a refreshing sight to the eye of the weary traveler.\* Here he made improvements looking towards a permanent home. He planted a great variety of fruit and an abundance of

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\* See Appendix D.

shade trees, and otherwise adorned the grounds. He also established a ferry across the creek, a little to the right of his house down the creek. It was a common large-sized scow held in its position and guided by ropes. It was called by the Indians Tgah-sí-yă-deh'-gěh, signifying "Rope Ferry." He obtained a grant from the legislature for this ferry, its privileges extending twenty years. Not long before his death he built a toll-bridge near by of black walnut timber which he purchased of the Indians. Toll was never collected from them, the privilege of free passing having been reserved to them by the State, as in other like cases. This bridge did not remain many years in its place. After Captain Pratt's death it was carried off in a spring freshet with the ice and floating down the river lodged almost bodily on the upper end of Grand Island. Mrs. Pratt was quite affected by the loss of this bridge; she said it seemed to her as though everything her husband had done was being swept away.

At the time Captain Pratt emigrated here, he left behind him his eldest son Samuel, occupying a position in a Mr. Bigelow's store, in the village of Towns-

hend. Here, at the age of nineteen, in the year 1806, he married Miss Sophia Fletcher, aged eighteen, daughter of General Fletcher of that place.

Miss Sophia Fletcher, the mother of Samuel F. Pratt, was a member of a highly distinguished family of Vermont. Her father, General Samuel

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sam<sup>l</sup> Fletcher". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the left of the text "Fletcher, occupied prominent positions in public service during a long, eventful and useful life."

Fletcher, occupied prominent positions in public service during a long, eventful and useful

life. His active career commenced at seventeen, when he enlisted as a soldier in the Provincial army in the war between the British and French colonies, during which he marched to Crown Point, and there served from the first of June, 1762, until the following November. At the breaking out of the Revolutionary war he was one of the foremost in the ranks, defending the disputed rights of his countrymen. A lieutenant's commission was sent him by the New York Provincial Congress. It was forwarded to him from Albany. The bearer, on reaching Mr. Fletcher's residence, learned that he was already in the army at



Cambridge. He had enlisted as a volunteer, and afterwards performed the duty of orderly sergeant from May, 1775, to January following. In March, 1776, he was appointed captain and received orders from the County Convention to raise "Minute Men." He was very active in forming these companies, which proved to be of great service from their superior drill and readiness to march at the beat of the drum. In June, 1777, he received orders to march his company of "Minute Men" to the relief of Ticonderoga. He was there when that stronghold—which had been captured by a fiery brother Vermonter in the name of "the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress"—was given up to General Burgoyne. On this expedition, with a party of thirteen, he attacked a British detachment of forty men, killed one of them, and took seven prisoners, without sustaining any loss. In August of the same year he was engaged in the battle of Bennington, and took an active part in that struggle. About this time he received a major's commission, and continued to serve until after the defeat of Burgoyne, being present at the surrender of that officer, after which he returned

home. He was made a brigadier-general of the State Militia in 1781, and afterwards attained the rank of major-general, and held that position for six years. He was a member of the first General Assembly of Vermont in 1778, and of several successive ones. He was subsequently chosen councillor, to which office he was re-elected each year until 1790. He was also once more chosen councillor in 1808. In 1782 he was appointed judge of the Supreme Court, but declined to serve. Six years later, in 1788, he was appointed high sheriff of Windham county, and continued to discharge the duties of that office uninterruptedly for eighteen years. At the age of twenty-one, General Fletcher married a daughter of Colonel John Hazeltine, a lady of refinement and ample fortune. The fact is mentioned that her mother lived to the advanced age of 104 years. Together with some others, General Fletcher acquired a right from the General Assembly of Vermont to a large tract of wild land, which he was interested at one time in developing. He was a man of enterprise and industry, and is said to have been a fine writer, and during a portion of his life kept a full,

accurate and daily record of events of public importance, or of interest to himself in consequence of his participation in them. His papers it is supposed were destroyed in the burning of the house of Mr. Ransom, his son-in-law, who was his executor. At the same time was destroyed a large and elegant old English folio edition of the Bible, which Colonel John Hazeltine gave to his daughter at the time of her marriage, and which General Fletcher bequeathed to his daughter, Mrs. Ransom, in his will. A memorial is still preserved of the old soldier, in the shape of a sword cane which he carried through all his campaigns in the Revolutionary war. These facts relating to General Samuel Fletcher I have gathered from records in the possession of the family, and find them fully corroborated in the histories of Vermont. From the History of Eastern Vermont, edited by B. H. Hall, and published by D. Appleton & Co., 1858, I quote verbatim the following sketch :

“In stature General Fletcher measured about five feet ten inches. In person he was straight and finely proportioned, but inclined to corpulency. His eyes, which were blue, corresponded well with a light com-

plexion, and his manly beauty was generally acknowledged. He was elegant in manners, and in deportment bland and refined. Kindness characterized his intercourse with all, and generousness and hospitality were the faults, if he had any, of his character. He was very particular in his dress, which, although in the fashion, was never contrary to the canons of good taste. Possessing the qualifications which make the man, he was also so fortunate as to combine with these most necessary requisites those other and finer excellencies which rendered him the 'beau ideal of a perfect gentleman.'"

The subject of this sketch arrived in Buffalo in the latter part of August, or early part of September, 1807. Inasmuch as the career of the Pratt family was intimately interwoven with the surrounding incidents of this early time, I shall speak of them, or of the noted personages who figured in them, as often as I deem it will aid in forming an intelligent judgment of a remarkable period, of which we are to decide for ourselves how far its direct or reflex influence affected the character or fortune of the individual principally occupying our thought.

There were a large number of Indians living near Buffalo at this and a later period. Their cabins were scattered along the course of Buffalo Creek on the rich alluvial lands adjoining for many miles. They were daily upon our streets, and Samuel F. Pratt was thrown into intimate acquaintance with them, both before the war, at his father's and grandfather's store, and afterwards when his maturer mind enabled him to acquire a more thorough knowledge of them. When a child they often held him in their arms and caressed him, and when a man he gave them his sympathy. These people, holding a prominent place in history—soon to pass away—once primitive lords of the soil—later servants of mercenary masters—could not but interest his generous nature. Among the prominent Indians with whom he was familiarly acquainted may be mentioned Farmer's Brother, Young King, Cornplanter, Red Jacket, Conjockity and Jack Berry. It is said of the latter that in the season of flowers he almost always wore a bunch of them in his hat as he promenaded the streets of Buffalo.

Samuel Pratt, Jr., son-in-law of General Fletcher, emigrated to Buffalo with his wife and infant son,

Samuel F.

Pratt, who

was then

about three

months old,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sam F. Pratt". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the left of the text "was then about three months old,".

in August, 1807. Mr. Pratt had previously made the journey from Townshend to Buffalo on horse-back and returned in the same manner. He brought his family here in one of the old fashioned, wide-tired, boot-shaped wagons, with parallel side-boards and cloth covered top, which formed one of a train, containing mostly Indian stores, under charge of Asa Pratt, who had been to Boston to make purchases and was then bringing them home. His younger brother, Pascal Paoli, then a lad of thirteen, had been permitted by his indulgent father to accompany his brother on this trip for the "fun of the thing." Mr. and Mrs. Pratt were accompanied by Mrs. Pratt's sister, Miss Valinda Fletcher, afterwards Mrs. Foster Young. Mrs. Young is the mother of William F. and Charles E. Young, of

Buffalo, and John F. and Samuel W. Young; also of Mrs. William Baldwin, Mrs. James Reid and Mrs. Robert Johnson. Mrs. Young is still living. While a home was being prepared for their reception they were members of Captain Pratt's family and added much to the social joys of this far away "Home in the West." Samuel Pratt, Jr., was a fine flute player, his wife a good soprano singer, and Miss Fletcher an excellent alto. As Captain Pratt's family were all singers and very fond of music, it formed a prominent feature in all their evening gatherings. The addition of this small party, with their fine clear voices and the flute accompaniment of Mr. Pratt, made the religious exercises in the "little red school house" more interesting. The latter entered upon the same line of business as that in which his father, Captain Pratt, was engaged; associating himself in 1807 in a partnership with Captain Benjamin Caryl, under the firm name of B. Caryl and Company. They occupied the same premises that Captain Pratt had used prior to the building of his large store on the Mansion House lot. It was nearly opposite his father's store on Exchange street.

Benjamin Caryl emigrated from Chester, Vermont, into Canada, in 1804, but foreseeing political troubles

between

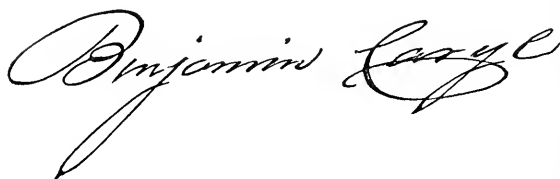
Canada

and the

United

States,

and pre-

A large, elegant handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Benjamin Caryl". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the left of the text "and the United States, and pre-".

ferring in such an event to be in the land of his birth and early associations, notwithstanding the strong inducements held out to him to stay, he removed to New Amsterdam, or Buffalo Creek, in 1807, bringing with him his four children. These were the following: Eliza Smith, afterwards Mrs. Haskins; Susan Young, afterwards Mrs. Lucius Storrs; Benjamin Clark, and Catherine Church, now Mrs. Dr. Warner. A. Hamilton and Charlotte Augusta were born here. Later, a partnership was formed under the firm name of Juba Storrs and Company, composed of Juba Storrs, Benjamin Caryl and Samuel Pratt, Jr. This firm did a large and successful business. Mr. Pratt, however, did not long remain in it, but retired that he might discharge more satisfactorily the duties



of Sheriff of Niagara county, an office that was conferred upon him March 10, 1810. Niagara county then included the present territory of Erie and Niagara. This office was one of great responsibility, and called him from home on frequent long trips which subjected him to unusual hardship and exposure. The firm of Juba Storrs and Company was doing a large business at the time of the burning of Buffalo. They built in 1810-11 the first brick building ever erected here.\* It was put up for a store, was two stories high and stood on the north-west corner of Exchange and Washington streets. The next brick building was put up in 1811, by Judge Walden, as a home for himself and his bride. It was located near the north-east corner of Main and Eagle streets, opposite the residence of Samuel Pratt, Jr., and contained the only piano in the village.

At a later period Mr. Pratt associated with him his brother-in-law, Elijah Leech, and they were doing business together under the firm name of Pratt and

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\* Some assert that there was a small brick building built previous to this upon the Eagle Tavern lot. The store of Juba Storrs and Company was the first brick structure put up here of any importance.

Leech, at the date of the destruction of Buffalo. The largest proportion of the sales of this firm to white people were effected in the way of supplying the wants of residents at Fort Erie and Chippewa, and the settlers along the Canada side of the Niagara River. Mr. Pratt at that time resided, as just stated, opposite Judge Walden's, on what is now the north-west corner of Eagle and Main streets. The west side of Main street, on account of the lake winds, was the favored side for residences. The dwelling houses before the war were nearly all built on that side. Back of Mr. Pratt's house was a stretch of primitive forest through which Niagara street had been cut, and in which the children were accustomed to play. As late as 1812, the original woods covered a good deal of the territory within the present city limits. In 1810 or 1811, Joseph Ellicott caused to be cut down a belt of trees extending on a line with Main street to the lake, so that the lake could be seen through the vista as one came down Main street. General Lucius Storrs says that when he came to Buffalo, in 1811, there were numerous stumps pertaining to the original forest throughout Main street.

Mr. Pratt, Jr., was the purchaser of Lot No. 39, corner of Main and Swan streets, where the Coit Block now stands. He subsequently sold it to Messrs. Townsend and Coit for the sum of two thousand and twenty dollars. The sale was negotiated through General Lucius Storrs, who endeavored to make Mr. Pratt abate the sum in excess of two thousand dollars. After the sale had been consummated, General Storrs asked Mr. Pratt why he had been so inflexible in the matter of that twenty dollars. He replied, "That is for a silk dress for my wife." At this time there was a frame building upon the premises, into which two promising young men from Norwich, Conn., who have since identified their names largely with the business interests of Buffalo, and by the probity of their characters have won enviable names for their descendants—Messrs. Townsend and Coit—entered and lived.

Samuel Pratt, Jr., led an active life and was closely engaged in business or public duties until the time of the burning of the village.\* His father,

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\* The following paragraph appeared in the *Buffalo Gazette* under date of Nov. 24th, 1812: "Captain Stevens' 'Grays,' from Willink, and Cap-

aided by his sons, Asa and Pascal P., carried on their extensive trade in furs with the Indians. Unfortunately, some time prior to 1808, he lost heavily upon a large shipment of furs to Europe which were damaged by salt water and not insured. This circumstance dimmed, in some degree, the thitherto bright prospects of the family, and resulted in his executing a mortgage upon his property at the corner of Main and Exchange streets. This mortgage is the first one ever recorded upon property in the village of New Amsterdam. It is dated 26th July, 1808, covers lots 2 and 3, and secures to Samuel May the payment of five thousand dollars.\* He

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tain Bemus's 'Grays,' from Hamburgh, have arrived in this village. General P. B. Porter, we learn, is to take command of the volunteers. Doctor C. Chapin is appointed Major; Samuel Pratt, Esq., Adjutant, and J. E. Chaplin, Quartermaster. The names of other officers are not in our possession. Brigadier-General Smith has now the command on the lines." It is not known whether Mr. Pratt accepted this appointment, if such were made.

\*The title to Lot No. 2 eventually passed to Mr. Samuel May, of Boston. He sold it to Joseph Landon for eight thousand dollars. In 1844, Mr. May visited Buffalo after an absence of thirty-four years. He told his host, Hon. George R. Babcock, that he would like to look at the lot he once owned here. Said he, "I want to find it myself, and you must not point it out to me." The two gentlemen started

continued, however, his business, improved his farm homestead and built the bridge across Buffalo Creek, for which he had obtained a charter. The bridge spanned the creek near where the Erie Railway freight depot is now located, on Ohio street.

When the war broke out, both the Pratt families were overwhelmed by a flood of misfortunes which no human foresight could have prevented, nor human energy have withstood. War was declared in June, 1812, and two months later (August 30, 1812) Captain Pratt died. His end was undoubtedly hastened by hardship and exposure. He returned home one August evening, and said to his wife: "Well, my dear, summer is ended, my labors are over, and I am sick." There was a prophetic sadness in his tone, foreboding the event which followed. He had reached the age of forty-eight. Had he survived, he probably would have been an active participant in the

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from the "Churches" and walked to the foot of Main street, but Mr. May did not find the lot he had once owned. He said that that lot of his was on a hill, and along by it there was a little creek, crossed by a small log bridge. This stream, as before stated, was then called Little Buffalo Creek, and is now the Hamburg Street Canal, crossed by the Main street bridge.

war. Among the military accoutrements which he brought with him from his Vermont home, was a pair of silver spurs. He said to his wife before the war began: "I must look up those spurs, my dear; I may have to use them."

The following notice of Captain Pratt's death appeared in the *Buffalo Gazette* of September 1, 1812:

DIED—In this town, yesterday morning, Captain Samuel Pratt, aged forty-eight years.

Captain Pratt was among the first inhabitants of this place. With them he cheerfully encountered all the privations and hardships incident to the first settlers of a new country. The public spirit displayed by him in whatever related to the improvements of the village, and the convenience of the early settlers in its vicinity, will render his memory dear to all who knew him. It may in truth be said of him, that to the wants of the indigent his hand was ever open—to their distresses his heart was never closed.

He left a numerous family and many friends to mourn his loss.

He was buried in Franklin Square burying-ground. Thus was this large family left without its natural head and protector, in the midst of a sea of troubles. He had proved himself a kind father and affectionate husband, as well as a prudent guide and counselor,

and his direction was needed now more than ever. The proximity of Buffalo to the British border, and to the hostile Indians beyond, whose mode of warfare is so shockingly different from our own—the doubts existing as to whether the intentions of the Indians within our own territory were peaceful—the inadequate condition of the defenses upon the Niagara frontier, and particularly at this point—all contributed to the uncertainty of the future, and caused the inhabitants of the town to be filled with terrible apprehension. At some period after the arrival of troops to guard the frontier, a number of officers came to Mrs. Captain Pratt one day and applied to her for the use of her house in the village for winter quarters. She declined to let them have it, in view of the serious inconvenience it would cause her large family. They insisted so strongly, however, stating that there was no other suitable house for them, and that they required a large dwelling and one centrally located, and going so far as to threaten forcible occupancy if it were not willingly relinquished, that she yielded to their demand; and to the other troubles of her desolate condition was added the

seeking of a new shelter for her children. During this period, and previous to her removal to the farm, the family were subject to frequent alarms, sometimes as ludicrous as serious. Divine services were held frequently, if not regularly, in the house corner of Main and Exchange streets every Sunday. Upon one occasion, after Lewiston was burned, a Baptist clergyman by the name of Elkanah Holmes, who had been sent out by the Missionary Society, and who had been laboring among the Indians at Tuscarora, was preaching in Mrs. Pratt's house from the text, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" While this reverend man, with his gray hair streaming down upon his shoulders, was enlarging upon his text in an earnest strain, Dr. Cyrenius Chapin came bustling in and told them they had better, by a good sight, be looking after their property than to be there preaching. This mild suggestion was clinched with a few characteristic expletives of the energetic doctor, more emphatic than pious. Upon this there was a great bustling and turmoil. The minister's wife had a quantity of silver, which she ran for and crammed into a couple of huge pockets in her old-



fashioned dress. Valuables were hastily gathered together, and people were running hither and thither, in and out and about the house, stimulated by the occasional cry of "British and Indians." The family soon rushed out and ran up Main street, seeking shelter and temporary rest in a deserted dwelling opposite the Hodge Place, near Cold Spring, belonging to a man by the name of Job Hoysington,\* who was subsequently shot and tomahawked on North street by the Indians. Here the fugitives made some tea in a tin cup, and, after getting over their alarm, they returned to their homes. It must not be inferred

*Cyrenius Chapin*

from what  
has been  
related,  
that Dr.  
Chapin  
was inten-

tionally irreverent, or that he was so regarded in the community, for it was customary to call upon him

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\* A brief sketch of the eventful life of this venturesome pioneer was written by Benjamin Hodge for the Buffalo Historical Society, in 1862, and published in William Ketchum's "History of Buffalo and the Senecas," Vol. 2, p. 261.

to make the prayer at funerals, in absence of a clergyman. This sacred duty he always discharged with a due sense of devotion and propriety.

The Rev. Elkanah Holmes and his wife were so thoroughly frightened that they did not return to the village, but made their way east without delay. They had been brought from Tuscarora by the large hearted Dr. Chapin, after the burning of Lewiston, and had been invited to stop with his family. Mrs. Captain Pratt, however, had insisted on their coming to her house, and they had been there about six months previous to this occurrence. Elkanah Holmes is represented as a man of strong faith. At the time of his coming to Buffalo he was unable to bring along his trunk. Dr. Chapin's conveyance carried Mrs. Holmes and her big pockets loaded with silver and some other effects, but there was no room in it for the big trunk, and it, with its owner, was left behind. Mr. Holmes engaged a soldier to bring it to Buffalo, agreeing to give him a dollar as remuneration. He had no dollar, but he said he knew the Lord would help him to one. As he was walking along the road, his cane struck something in the

sand and knocked out a silver dollar, which he gave to the soldier. The good parson, in his stout faith, took this as a matter of course, regarding it as the part of Providence in this emergency, to provide the dollar he had promised.

The parents of the subject of this sketch, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Pratt, with their little family of three children, Samuel F., Lucius H. and Sophia, resided at this time, as before stated, on the corner of Main and Eagle streets, and joined in the escapade to Cold Springs with the rest. Pascal P. was not born until several years later. During the anxious years intervening between the first talk of war and the burning of Buffalo, Mr. and Mrs. Pratt lost two daughters, who died soon after birth—the youngest only two weeks before the destruction of the village. The constant excitements of the time were not favorable to happy maternity.

A culmination of troubles came at length to the Pratts, as well as their anxious neighbors, in the burning and sacking of Buffalo. On the night of December 30th, 1813, a little past midnight, the weather being raw and disagreeable, Mrs. Leech

(Captain Pratt's daughter Permelia), who with her husband was sojourning at the Widow Pratt's farm homestead upon the creek, heard the booming of a distant cannon. Her watchful fears instantly interpreted the sound as the signal for the British and Indians to commence an attack upon Buffalo, which had been anticipated as a retaliatory measure for the wanton and foolish burning of Newark, now Niagara—then a prosperous village containing about one hundred and fifty houses. This had been done by General McClure about two weeks previous. Mrs. Captain Pratt, with her daughter Marilla, was in Batavia at this time, visiting a Mrs. Spencer. Her health was very poor, she having been worn down with anxiety, excitement and grief at the loss of her husband. Mrs. Leech, after repeated efforts, aroused her husband from an indifference created by numerous false alarms. It was soon evident that no time was to be lost in rescuing the family of her brother Samuel from impending danger. Jack Ray, a faithful negro servant and fugitive slave, who had found a warm nest by the chimney corner of this hospitable family, harnessed up the team, and was dispatched about

daylight through the snow and mud to the village. In the meantime the family of Samuel Pratt had been aroused by Judge Ebenezer Walden, who came

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ebenezer Walden". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background. The first line contains the name "Ebenezer Walden" and the second line features a decorative flourish.

to one of the windows and rapped upon it and told them the British were upon them. The frequent previous alarms had caused Mrs. Pratt to be not wholly unprepared. For months she had not entirely undressed her children when putting them to bed, and had kept a few days' provisions packed up ready to be used in an emergency; but nevertheless the alarm and the attack seemed to the family at this time to be almost simultaneous. The team from the farm at length arrived, and Mr. Pratt hurriedly placed his family within the wagon. They were as follows:

Mrs. Samuel Pratt; Samuel F., then about seven years old; Lucius H., then about five, and Sophia, then about three. With them was a little colored servant girl nicknamed "Tam," who appears to have been a perfect little witch of the genuine "Topsy" genus. When in the wagon, and all ready to start, they found that a child belonging to the very large family of their next neighbor, a little girl about five years old, named Mary Haddock, had been left behind in the fright and confusion of her parents' flight. They took her in and had barely time to get away, whipping their horses into a run. This little lamb did not get within the family fold until the following spring, and her parents in the meantime remained ignorant of her fate. Mr. Pratt having seen his family started, then went to assist his neighbors in the defense of the public interests. The Pratts had proceeded but a short distance, in fact were descending the little hill at the Mansion House, when Mrs. Pratt discovered that she had left her silver upon the mantel in the house. Tam wanted to go back for it, but Mrs. Pratt forbade her, being afraid she might run into danger; but Tam slipped off the wagon

before Mrs. Pratt knew it, and ran back for the silver. She returned soon, and reported that the soldiers and Indians were in the front room, had all the earthen jars on the table, and were eating up the sweetmeats and mince pies. Of the first, Mrs. Pratt had as usual a good winter's supply, consisting of native crab-apples, wild plums, berries, etc. Tam rode a little further, then quietly got off the wagon, and they never saw her afterwards. It is to be presumed that she gave her whole mind and time subsequently to the preservation of Mrs. Pratt's silver from the British. As they started up their horses, a detachment of soldiers marching forward in regular order was seen by the family on Main near High street, their glistening bayonets glancing in the rays of the morning sun. This detachment of British or Indians marched into town by way of North street, then called the Guide Board Road.\*

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\* It is not impossible that these troops constituted a small company of exempts from the Williamsville Hospital, under the command of Lieut. Riddle, who marched into town upon that eventful morning and rashly attempted to save the village.

The family having reached the homestead, after a brief halt, further preparations were made for a more protracted flight. Another team or two were improvised with sleighs or wagons, and the party crossing the creek proceeded up the lake shore, amid a motley group of hurrying fugitives. Some one said: "See, they are burning the village," and looking back they beheld the lurid flames bursting from their loved homes.\* In the distance could be heard occasional shots, and the inhabitants were fleeing in consternation from the doomed town. At this juncture Mr. Leech said to Jack Ray: "Jack, whip up the horses." One of the horses harnessed in the team had been a favorite saddle-horse of Captain Pratt's, and was called "Bob." He was a great pet of Jack's. Jack replied gruffly: "I aint gwine to kill Captain's hoss." Bob was not only a pet of Jack's, but also of the children. He was very docile and intelligent, and had been wont at times to carry with gentle pride, at one load, Samuel F. and Lucius H. Pratt and their two little cousins. Many, less fortunate

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\* Buffalo contained at this time something over one hundred houses, mostly low frame structures.



than the Pratts, were traveling on foot, laden with household effects. Among such, though in advance, having left at an earlier hour, were Dr. Chapin's two daughters and Hiram Pratt. The Doctor had the misfortune many years before to lose a little boy, an only son, in whose loss the parents were inconsolable. Hiram Pratt was about the same age as their son, and the strong friendship existing between the families induced Hiram's parents to let him become a member of Dr. Chapin's family, to whom he was greatly attached. The Doctor's residence and office were on the north-west corner of Main and Swan streets, the site of the present Chapin Block.\* When the attack was about to be made, the Doctor, who

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\* On this place of Dr. Chapin's, under the present office room of De Witt C. Weed and Company's hardware store, was a well from fifty to sixty feet deep. A young lad by the name of Salisbury, while playing about the curb one day, stumbled and fell in. An Indian was standing by him at the time, who in consequence was greatly frightened, supposing that the boy would be killed, and that he would be charged with pushing him in. The Indian ran away, leaving the unlucky lad to his fate. Fortunately the well had a windlass and bucket, and young Salisbury was rescued soon after, not having suffered serious injury. The Indian staid away for years. At length he was seen in his accustomed haunts, and after a time was heard to inquire about "the boy that was drowned in the well." Young Salisbury exonerated him from any share in the accident.

was as impetuous as he was brave, and bent upon making a stout defense of Buffalo, told his two daughters to go to his farm in Hamburg, and that they must look out for themselves. Whereupon he hurried away, leaving the children with Hiram Pratt, who was then about thirteen years of age. These two lasses were Amelia and Louisa, the latter afterwards Mrs. Thaddeus Weed. Amelia, the elder, was then not over ten years of age. Having a good share of the father's pluck, the girls set off on foot with their devoted young gallant. There had been a recent fall of snow. The ground was not frozen, and they splashed along through snow and mud, brave as their elders, taking the road among the scattered trees and bushes to the Pratt homestead on the creek. Here Hiram prevailed on his sister Mary, then about eleven years of age, to accompany them, the other members of the family scarcely knowing of their intentions. They crossed the creek and pursued their way with the straggling crowd, hurrying along the lake shore. A militia man running away told the children to hurry, or the Indians would catch them. "Why don't you stop and fight them

then, you coward?" replied the elder of the two brave little Chapin girls. About four miles on, at Smoke Creek, they stopped, being very tired, and the younger children being frightened began crying. In this disheartened plight, the teams containing the Pratt families overtook them, and Mary was taken in. Hiram and the two Chapin girls could not be induced to ride, but trudged on in the cold, eventually reaching the Chapin farm, ten miles from Buffalo.

The Pratt families, with little Samuel F., who was then seven years old, pursued their way to Griffin's Mills, where they stopped the first night. They staid in a log house and slept on the floor. The next night they stopped at a log tavern, where they were again obliged to sleep on the floor, and were surrounded with wounded soldiers, who kept up a pitiful moaning during the night.\* At this point Hiram,

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\* There were two routes of retreat from Buffalo used at this time, one *via* the Williamsville road, and the other was called the South Route and Big Tree road—the latter being the one the Pratt families followed. Both routes presented during this time of general dismay continued scenes of confusion, suffering, cowardice and terror.

who had safely delivered his charge in Hamburg, overtook the family. Mrs. Captain Pratt had heard of the disaster to Buffalo, and the good woman was filled with the deepest anxiety concerning the fate of her children. She was kept in a state of anxious suspense for five days before learning of their safety. She, with others, had fled from Batavia, and was stopping with a relative in Lima, where she expected to get the first tidings of her loved ones. The teams were five days in reaching Lima. She heard of their approach, and rushed out upon the porch as they came before the door. As she saw those familiar faces, and counted them all in an instant, the revulsion of feeling was too great for worn out nature, and she sank fainting into the arms of those about her.

Samuel Pratt (S. F. Pratt's father) staid behind to watch and protect property. He and Judge Walden put out the fires kindled in numerous buildings, but only to see them again lighted by the enemy. This was a perilous task, and they were obliged to keep out of sight while performing it. Mr. Pratt staid several nights at the farm-house and cautiously made his way to and from the village.

The road between was filled with stumps and bordered with bushes and scattered trees, the forest being adjacent. Once during the season of devastation, as he was going from the village to the farm on horseback, he caught sight of a couple of Indians skulking behind a large beech tree. Near him was a man who had worked for him, by the name of Triscott, about twenty-three years of age. Mr. Pratt shouted: "Indians! Run, Triscott, for your life." He had scarcely uttered the words before a rifle ball whizzed over his horse's back, and poor Triscott fell dead and was scalped by the savages. Mr. Pratt, with his fleet horse, was out of range of the deadly rifle before the savage could reload. This occurred near the foot of Michigan street. Lucius H. Pratt says his father more than once pointed out the tree to his brother Samuel and himself when they were little boys, and related to them the incident.

The British remained here three days, with their Indian allies, plundering and burning. To their credit it must be said, that they endeavored to destroy all the liquor in the town, to prevent its crazing the Indians, and here let me digress long enough to say

that spirituous liquors were not only kept in stock for sale by merchants at this time, but were then, and even at a much later period, placed behind the counter and made accessible and free to their best customers, who were expected to help themselves. Liquor was also to be found on every family side-board, and was always offered to the incomer among the first civilities extended him. It was used freely at all "Bees" or "Raisings," at all public gatherings, and even at funerals. Temperance societies were then unknown. The first temperance society is said to have been established in Massachusetts in 1813. Pastors and laymen indulged equally in the use of liquor, without thought of impropriety. Nor is this to be wondered at, when we consider the experience of hardship and exposure our fathers underwent. Theirs, in a great measure, was an outdoor life. Their traveling was accomplished tediously. It took as many days of discomfort as it now takes hours of ease to make the trip to Batavia. They made their journeys about the country on horseback, by wagon or by stage; and when the traveler alighted and dragged his benumbed limbs before the blazing log fire, and

saw glistening in its light the row of glass decanters, with their inspiring contents, it is not perhaps to be wondered that, meeting the hand-grasp of an old friend, who had perhaps emigrated from the same town at the East, and with whom the rough and trying experiences of their common pioneer life were to be talked over and compared, the temptation to excessive conviviality sometimes became too strong to be resisted. Too easily, as the long evening wore away, the old friends might be drawn, with their glass and gossip, into indulgences not excusable in our day, and which, when habitually practiced in theirs, did not fail to bring about regrettable results. He who should stand aloof and decline to join in the social glass at such times would be regarded as a churl. It would be unjust to judge the then prevalent customs of society, or of its individual members, by our standard, adopted under widely different circumstances.

But to return to the hapless village and the story of its destruction. Among other incidents of the entry of the British, it is related that Augustus C. Fox, then a young man, was asked in Juba Storrs

and Company's store, by a British officer, to show him where the liquor was. He took the officer to the repository in the cellar, which was locked up. Reaching the place, he said: "Oh! I forgot the key," and went up-stairs for it. But it seems he did not look in the right place; on the contrary, he saw a horse across the street, and mounting it rode rapidly away. It may be that farther on in our narrative, we shall catch another glimpse of his flying figure.

As is well known the town was completely burned, with the exception of the large Pratt storehouse, corner of Ellicott and Seneca streets; a frame house of Mrs. St. John's, which stood near the corner of Mohawk and Main streets, and the bullet-riddled frame blacksmith shop occupied by David Reese, who was established in business here under the patronage of the government for the benefit of the Indians.

The large storehouse built by Captain Pratt was saved by the invaders as a place in which to pack up plundered property, preparatory to sending it off. Mrs. Lovejoy's, Judge Walden's and Dr. Chapin's houses were not burned until the second day. Mrs. Lovejoy had an altercation with the Indians, who



entered her house for plunder, and she was murdered and her body thrown into the street. Judge Walden carried the lifeless form back into the house. The body and the building were afterwards consumed together. Into the blacksmith shop of David Reese, after the retirement of the foe, were gathered the frozen dead found in the streets, to the number of about thirty, presenting a ghastly spectacle. An old negro named Frankie stood in a corner scalped, a tomahawk remaining in his skull. He was an inveterate stutterer and contorted his mouth into a grotesque expression of agonizing effort while speaking. Pascal P. Pratt, as he looked upon poor Frankie, said it seemed to him as though he had died with a stuttered sentence frozen in his mouth.

From Lima the retreating fugitives went on to the residence of Israel Chapin in Canandaigua, the father of Mrs. Greig of that place. Mrs. Captain Pratt and the Chapins were originally from the same town of Hatfield, in Massachusetts. After a few weeks Mrs. Captain Pratt, with her children, went back by sleigh to Westminster, and the family took up their abode in the same house they had lived in before, which

fortunately was unoccupied. They were escorted back by Pascal P., who always proved himself to be a devoted son. Mrs. Captain Pratt had some income from the sale of wild lands in New England, and did not immediately suffer as did many others. Shortly after the burning and pillage of Buffalo, Samuel Pratt joined his wife and proceeded to Dummerston, Vermont, where they were for a time the guests of Honorable Samuel Porter of that place. They staid there a few months, and then returned to Buffalo. Widow Pratt set out to return the following July, but hearing of the battle of Chippewa she stopped at East Bloomfield, Ontario county, until the following February, and then completed her journey.

Pascal P. Pratt, having seen his mother (Mrs. Captain Pratt) carefully provided for, also returned to Buffalo, and occupied with his brother Samuel's family the old homestead on Buffalo Creek. It had been converted by the military authorities into a sort of hospital for wounded officers and soldiers.

The blow to Samuel Pratt's fortunes by the extraordinary events just related had been very severe. He found himself without the means of embarking

again in business, or opportunities of retrieving his fortune; in fact, after the war, the uncertainty regarding the future prospects of Buffalo and insecurity of property upon the frontier were such as to palsy business enterprise for years; and although Mr. Pratt was not a despondent man, it became evident to him that the large expectations which he had built upon his plans could never be realized. About this time, his health became impaired, and he never sufficiently recovered it or his means to engage again in business upon his own account. When Mrs. Captain Pratt returned with her family, she re-occupied the old home built by her husband. Samuel Pratt and his three children, in consequence of the scarcity of dwellings in the recently burned village, had no alternative but to move into a primitive pioneer's dwelling some twenty rods above the ferry on the opposite side of the creek from his mother, while the Leech family lived nearly opposite, but rather below. The bleak aspect which this part of the city now presents was not then apparent. The dense belt of forest before referred to extended between the creek and the lake, sheltering it from severe winds, while

not shutting off the freshness of the summer lake breezes. The fruit planted by these families here was very fine at maturity, especially peaches, which were luscious and abundant.

The Ohio street homestead after the war, as well as the village home of the Pratts before the war, was a favorite calling-place of the great chiefs living in the vicinity of Buffalo. The same may be said, though in less degree, of the home of Samuel F. Pratt's father. The Indians were always kindly welcomed and hospitably treated by the Pratt family, and of these peculiar guests it may be said that they invariably conducted themselves with decorum. Cornplanter, Farmer's Brother, Red Jacket, Young King and others of note were not unfrequent occupants of a seat by the great chimney corner. Cornplanter is described by a member of the family (Mrs. Burt) as being a noble looking old man, and in every respect having the appearance of the great warrior he was famed to be. The same authority states that the celebrated chief Red Jacket is well represented by the portrait of him in the possession of the Buffalo Historical Society. That picture truth-

fully illustrates the cunning and shrewdness of his character, qualities which, united with his wonderful native eloquence, were, more than his courage, the source of the strong influence he possessed over his people.

Mrs. Burt further relates that he once fell through a hole in the ice near the Pratt house on Buffalo Creek, and called lustily to her brother, Pascal P., by his Indian name, O-wé-nòh-gěh, to "come and help Jack out; if you don't, the black coats will get all the land," thus hinting at his unmitigable hatred of the missionaries, and the attempts being made to get possession of the Reservation by the Holland Land Company. Pascal P. Pratt was called O-wé-nòh-gěh,\* "Floating Island," or "Floating Raft," by the Indians, probably on account of his connection with the Pratt Ferry.

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\* For the proper spelling and signification of the Indian names used in this work, I am indebted to the Rev. Asher Wright, Missionary to the Indians upon the Cattaraugus Reservation, and Mr. N. H. Parker, Government interpreter for the Indians residing upon the same Reservation.

The same authority also gives us the following. "Red Jacket was once in my mother's house and complained severely of a sore throat. My mother prepared a copious decoction of vinegar, butter and honey, which she administered to him. It had a magical effect, quickly clearing out the enormous flue of his big throat, which so delighted Jacket as to put him in high glee. He said 'that was just like Washington,' being reminded of the delicate pudding-sauces he had eaten at the capital, which he had often visited." \*

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\* Among the Indians of the olden time familiar to Samuel F. Pratt and the Pratt family, in addition to those already enumerated, the following deserve special mention :

Sho-noh'-gaes, Long Horn, *alias* Tommy Jemmy.

O-sdä'-òt, Steep Rock.

Uk'-da-gooh', Black Squirrel.

Nah'-ga-nyah-goh', Beaver.

De-gaé-oh-da-ge, Two Guns.

Sa-gus'-ga-nes, He Likes Her, *alias* Charles Gray Beard.

Nya-gwahl, Ot-was-aah, Young Bear, *alias* Reuben.

In 1818, a purse was made up by a party of gentlemen to give these seven Indians the benefits and refining influence of a "foreign tour." Whether the enterprise originated in motives of gain, or of entire disin-

Notwithstanding the depressing gloom of these dark days of trouble, Cupid was busy as ever with his arrows and on one occasion, of which mention is to be made, the altar of Hymen was reared in the hospitable shelter of the old Pratt mansion. On a previous

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terestedness, or a compounding of both, I have not attempted to fathom. This curious party set out under the charge of Mr. A. C. Fox and duly arrived in England, where they received marked attention, being entertained by various aristocratic families in different parts of the country. They were treated with especial kindness by people belonging to the Society of Friends, who manifested much interest in their welfare, and made them many presents. They gave the Indians commissions to send them seeds of the native fruit trees, and wrote subsequently for them, but the indolent Indian nature was not equal to the grateful effort of fulfilling such requests. They returned as wise as they went, having acquired an extensive acquaintance with foreign wines. The seven tourists were, in the main, fine-looking men. Steep Rock, in particular, was a remarkably symmetrical figure, over six feet in height, lithe, graceful and delicate in his movements. His moral attributes were not in keeping, however, with his fascinating person, for he was quite dissipated and of a wild and reckless disposition. During their tour, they gave exhibitions illustrating the customs of their people by dances in costume and other performances. The receipts from these entertainments were appropriated to defraying the expenses of the journey. A lady of high respectability and fortune in England, who met Steep Rock at a fashionable dinner party, became completely enamored of him and expressed a desire to return to America with the party. Mr. Fox positively objected to any such wild scheme, knowing the habits of the person whom she so greatly fancied, and the trouble the young lady was preparing to bring upon herself. He

page, a glimpse was given of Mr. Augustus C. Fox. It was while the pillage of Buffalo was going on, and, in a most unceremonious manner, he had left a British officer in the cellar of Juba Storrs & Co.'s store. Emerging from the building, the young man mounted a horse and, with other belated fugitives, took rapid flight from the village. Overtaking a party encumbered with an extra conveyance, he bought it, with the necessary harness, on the spot. It was a "pung," a simple species of vehicle, extemporized by fastening a crockery crate on a pair of

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did not permit any intimacy to grow out of the acquaintance, and hurriedly left the place which had been the scene of this romantic attachment without letting those behind know anything of the future plans of the party. The assurance given to the lady by Mr. Fox that he was a wretched dissipated Indian, without influence among his own people or the whites at home, did not dispel her extraordinary infatuation. After the return of Steep Rock to America, she caused his portrait to be painted upon ivory, and forwarded it to him, accompanied by five gold guineas. Seven or eight years afterwards, Mrs. Burt saw him take out this portrait, which was enclosed in a beautiful clasped case, and, while talking about it, melt into tears over the beautiful "pale face" on the far away island beyond the sea. An oil painting, grouping the seven Indians of this party on one piece of canvas, was painted in England during their stay there, and is now in the possession of Hon. Orlando Allen.



sled runners. Speeding on in this primitive chariot, he overtook the Pratt families and volunteered to relieve them of two individuals who formed part of their load. One of these was Miss Esther Pratt, then a charming young miss. Young Fox saved his life in this retreat, but lost his heart, and the consequence was a wedding, which peaceful event took place the same day that peace was announced between the warring nations. Mr. Fox then resided in Erie, and from thence he duly arrived at the appointed time. The house was decorated with evergreens, and preparations were made for a grand marriage festivity. All that was lacking to make the affair a complete success was something substantial in the line of edibles, for which our sturdy forefathers had an unmistakable liking. It fortunately happened, at this critical moment, that a western-bound emigrant came along, and out of his good nature and big covered wagon was coaxed, with a slight extra inducement in the shape of a ten dollar gold piece, a nice smoked ham. This was the crowning feature of the feast, and occupied a central position upon a

deal table. The prayer preceding the ceremony was offered by Deacon Callender, who was carefully appareled in his old-fashioned suit, comprising knee-breeches and hose, while, for the occasion, his silver shoe-buckles glistened in the candle-lighted parlor with unusual luster. The marriage ceremony was performed by Judge Tupper. Besides the various members of the Pratt families, there were present General Lucius Storrs, Captain Caryl and his daughters, and a few others of the very few neighbors of the time.

In accordance with established rules of romance, Hiram Pratt, who fled with the courageous Misses Chapin from the burning town a little in advance of Mr. Fox, should have married one of these interesting young lasses, but his destiny ran otherwise. He espoused eventually an estimable young lady of Northampton, Mass., a Miss Maria Fowle.

As no further reference will be made to the widely known Pratt homestead, or to incidents that transpired therein, it may be well to say here that Mrs. Esther Wells Pratt, wife of Captain Samuel Pratt,

the true-hearted Christian mother, who, through the deprivations of frontier life for more than a quarter of a century, had dispensed a generous hospitality to every race and color of homesick wanderers that had crossed her threshold, went finally in 1830 to that home where there is no war nor suffering. She died at the age of sixty-four years.

The family of Samuel Pratt (the father of Samuel F.) was sorely pressed after the war, and the strictest frugality was required to secure even the necessities of life for a home formerly habituated to every seasonable luxury. This state of affairs continued for a number of years. Providence at length provided them with a friend in a quarter from which the least was expected. Mr. Bigelow, a gentleman of large means and extensive business connections, with whom Samuel Pratt was formerly a clerk in Townshend, happened to pass through Buffalo on horseback, pursuing his way westward to look after an interest he had in Canada. By the merest chance he stopped at the door of Samuel Pratt's house, which stood near the highway, and asked for a glass of water.

Mrs. Pratt came to the door, when the surprise of a mutual recognition instantly occurred. It was hard for him to realize that in the clean, tidily dressed, pleasant-spoken yet poverty-pinched woman before him, he beheld Sophy Fletcher; she who in her maiden prime had been the pride of an aristocratic home. But her ingenuousness of character and true lady-like instincts added a grace even to the poverty by which she was surrounded. The floors of her house were like snow; every piece of iron, tin or brass work which met the sight shone like a more precious metal, and throughout the house reigned that sanctity of sweetness and freshness which is only discernible where cleanliness and godliness go hand in hand. Interested at once in their situation, Mr. Bigelow set himself so earnestly to work to relieve Mr. Pratt from the embarrassments under which he was struggling that the services he then rendered ever after remained in the grateful remembrance of his children. In his effort Mr. Bigelow was laudably seconded by Judge E. Walden. This irreproachable man proved himself a life-long and steadfast friend of the family. In pursuance of his plans for their assistance, Mr. Bige-

low proposed that Mr. Pratt should take charge of his business interests at St. Thomas, in Canada, where he had a store, and thus obtain an opportunity to retrieve his fortunes. Mr. Pratt accepted the proposition and went to Canada in May, 1818, leaving Samuel F. Pratt, who was then only eleven years old, in charge of his mother. Mr. Bigelow entertained for Mr. Pratt an almost paternal regard. He had known him from an infant, and repeatedly bore testimony to the esteem in which he held him and his business qualities. Of some thirty young men whom he had trained, no other one, he averred, had so entirely perfected himself as a thorough business man. This was largely attributable to the natural abilities he manifested in this direction. It was not possible for any one to have greater confidence in the integrity and ability of another than Mr. Bigelow had in his protege.

Samuel Pratt (the father of Samuel F.) was a man of about five feet nine inches in height, of rather slender figure, delicate in general appearance, polished in his address and remarkable for his politeness, ease and grace of manner. These were heightened by an

air of refinement and quiet reserve. I learn from contemporaneous authority that he was a man esteemed for his integrity, an affectionate father, a true friend and a man of great kindness of heart. Of a genial though retiring disposition, he was fond of good fellowship, and possessed many gentle virtues which endeared him to his associates.

The home just referred to of Samuel F. Pratt's mother was undoubtedly a model one, not only as to neatness but in other particulars. It contained one of the broad, high-mantled chimney fire-places of the old settlers, with heavy cast andirons, large crane hung with pot-hooks, and other adjuncts belonging to the mode of living in the olden time. Those who may have observed with interest the representations of the fire-place at one of our "Old Folks' Festivals," can fancy for themselves a picture of Mrs. Pratt's home with this principal object of attraction and the veritable Indian callers who occasionally sat around its hearth. It was no small task to supply these dispensers of winter cheer with fuel. Samuel F. Pratt's sister Sophia (Mrs. Dr. Pratt), says: "One

winter when father was in Canada, it was very cold, and the boys, Samuel and Lucius, were oc-

cupied all

the while

Saturdays

in getting

wood. They

had small

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sam F. Pratt". The signature is written in dark ink and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

axes or hatchets with which they cut down saplings of a size that they could manage, and, piling them together, would bind them with a rope and then draw them through the snow to the house with a single horse that we had. Samuel, at this time, was about eleven years old and Lucius nine. This task of providing wood was of daily recurrence, although it was only on Saturdays that raids were made to the forest for material. The boys would get up before daylight every winter's morning, and prepare wood for mother to use through the day, and then go whistling off to school in the village. Samuel was a great whistler. He not only whistled a good deal, but a good while, and it was such a merry,

cheerful whistle as to inspire all about him with happiness.

"The brothers had a pair of skates in partnership, to the use of which they had an alternate right; but Lucius had them more than his share, I used to think, for while Samuel would be helping me on the ice and over the rough places, which he was always particular to do, and paying me a great deal of attention, Lucius, who was a right merry fellow, would get the skates on and be cutting pigeon wings about us. We usually went upon the ice to go to school, following the creek as far as the foot of Main street.

"Samuel would generally draw me upon a little sled, and Lucius would rush like the wind backward and forward upon the ice on his skates.\* Samuel

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\* A characteristic feature of the scenes on the ice of which Mrs. Dr. Pratt speaks was the presence of Indian children. In the juvenile gatherings of the time there were generally more Indian than white boys. On their way to school upon the ice, the Pratt children would generally find numerous dusky companions playing about them. If there was a little snow, groups of Indian boys and young men would be indulging in their favorite game of *Gd-wa-saah'* (Snow Snake). The implements of this sport consisted of hard-wood sticks about six feet long, made smooth and flattened. One end of the stick upon one side was made larger than the other, and formed a head. They had a way of dexterously throwing these



was always considerate and painstaking in everything, while Lucius was a merry child. Samuel was cheerful, but did not have such a flow of fun. We were always a happy family among ourselves, and mother would often say, 'I have such a laughing family!' We were always helping each other, and never divided among ourselves—never had any little tiffs or quarrels. What was the interest of one was the interest of all.

"My brother first attended a school kept by Miss Irene Leech, in a stone house belonging to Joshua Gillett, corner of Main and Terrace streets. It was a boys and girls' school, kept in one of the chambers of the house. A Mr. Folsom was subsequently his teacher in the same place. He next attended Deacon

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sticks to a great distance. The successful player in the game was the one who could throw the stick the farthest, and stop it the quickest with his foot when his opponent hurled it back. But woe to the moccasined foot struck by this swift missile.

O. H. Marshall, Esq., says: "The snow snakes were much used in the early days of Buffalo. The Indians were quite expert with them, and could send them to an immense distance, particularly when they were in the track formed by a sleigh runner. They would strike an object with great force. I remember having one pass through one of my boots between my boot and the sole of my foot."

Callender's select school. My impression is, that Brother Samuel thought him to be a very severe man. He did not attend his school more than one season.

“He was a studious scholar, learned his lessons well and never got into trouble at school. He was always busy when at home. He was devoted to his mother and anxious, not only when a boy but in later years, to know that she had everything she wanted. She was very fond of him, as of all her children, and at the period referred to relied greatly upon him, he being the eldest. I have heard mother frequently say, ‘There never was a mother blessed with better sons.’ Only a week before she died, Samuel had one of his pleasant and frequent visits with her, and after he had left, she said, ‘Was mother ever blessed with a better son than Samuel has been to me?’ Such a testimony must add joy to the enfranchised spirit of that son. Brother Samuel was not over eight years old when he commenced going to Sunday School. He went with brother Lucius until I was old enough to go, and then I joined them. The school was held at one time in

one of the rooms of the old Court House, granted to the First Presbyterian Church for its use while they were preparing a chapel. Jasper Corning was brother's first teacher. A Mr. Squier was minister at that time, and we children regarded him as a very serious man. Mother was one of the choir.

"There was a very high water once when we lived beyond the creek—I think in 1818. There was only one spot between the ferry and the village that was not covered, and upon that the cattle and sheep from adjoining pastures and commons were huddled. It occurred in the afternoon. Mother noticed the water rising on a plank before the door, and, stepping out, saw it overflowing from the lake. Father, mother, Mr. Leech and myself, being in the house at the time, started for Mr. Leech's house. We picked our way thither by the help of some logs and a rail fence. I was on father's back, and, as I looked towards the lake, I saw the enormous waves rolling and tumbling in upon the shore. Before we got to Mr. Leech's house, father and mother were wading up to their waists in water. The water did not subside for several days. At length it got down

so that we children had a splendid time sailing around in a washtub in the basement kitchen."

Mrs. Pratt was a woman of middle height and symmetrical figure, slightly inclined to *embonpoint*, fair complexioned, with light brown hair, regular features and large, lustrous eyes of grayish blue. It is said her mother used to say of her, "Why, Sophy's eyes are as large as a poor man's farm; she would be handsome but for that." She was graceful in her movements, and while ceremoniously polite was not stiffly so, her manner partaking of the ease and high breeding belonging to the old school.' It has been remarked that many of her characteristics in this respect were reproduced in her son Samuel. In 1856, it was my good fortune to act as escort to Mrs. Pratt from Buffalo to Schenectady, upon the occasion of her journey to make a visit to a relative in Lansingburgh. She was at that time sixty-eight years old. I was not long in finding out that I had a most delightful traveling companion. In her company was a Mrs. Underwood (her niece), and it seemed as though Mrs. Pratt's whole thought was devoted to our comfort and pleasure. In all the





little arrangements relating to the convenience and ease of railroad travel, she was indefatigable to please, forgetting herself entirely. She was promptly responsive and attentive in conversation, and her talk was quick, bright, cheerful and very entertaining. All, too, was without effort, and graceful and sparkling as a mountain brook. I could not have had a more agreeable day's ride had I shared it under like circumstances with the "belle of the season." And thus this dear lady always seemed to me in subsequent interviews. I should infer that with her healthy moral nature she could hardly ever have suffered from an hour's despondency. Mrs. Sophia Pratt says: "Mother was an excellent cook and a very particular housekeeper. Her house was always in the most perfect order throughout. Her floors were always remarkably clean, and we used to laugh at mother because some one was in the habit of saying, 'it was better to eat from Mrs. Pratt's floors than strangers' tables.'" The society that gathered around her was always of the best and truest-hearted people. She was a very systematic person, and regular in her hours of devotion. Her unvarying custom

was to read before breakfast, having her own early and private devotions and meditations first. After breakfast she would spend an hour in reading, prayer, and studying the Bible with the family. She was so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Christian forbearance that she never spoke ill of others, nor under any circumstances permitted herself to quarrel with any one. She possessed in a remarkable degree that quality, so often lamentably lacking, viz., discretion in the keeping of the tongue. At the table she observed silent grace, and although it was but for a moment, that moment was an impressive one. This was omitted, however, when she had company, as she did not like to do anything that would attract attention, and believed religion should be undemonstrative.

About a year after the departure of Samuel Pratt for Canada, at the invitation of Mr. Bigelow, Samuel F. Pratt, then about twelve years old, took passage upon a sailing vessel to join his father. The vessel lay becalmed at the mouth of Buffalo Creek two or three days after preparations had been made to sail, and after our young fortune-seeker had gone on



board. To be so near his mother and not see her, to miss for the first time her morning greeting and good-night kiss, was too much for an affectionate boy. He importuned the Captain, as a matter of great necessity, to allow him to take some clothes home to be washed. With sailor-like good nature the Captain accepted this insufficient plea of a homesick lad, and, although momentarily hoping to sail, ordered him set ashore, giving him a two hours' furlough. He made the most of this brief visit with his mother and home companions, and bidding them a second good-bye, they fondly watched him from the door of the home he had reluctantly left until he had reached the woods extending between them and the lake, towards which they last saw him with his bundle running as fast as his little legs could carry him. After an uneventful passage he landed at Kettle Creek, in the woods of the Canada shore, and thence went to St. Thomas, where his father was. The latter remained with Messrs. Bigelow and Goodhue in Canada about a year and a half, when he returned to Buffalo, his health having completely failed. Samuel F. Pratt remained in the employ of the same firm

about three years, and won the full esteem and confidence of his employers.

During this period, in the year 1820, he made a visit home of a month, coming and returning on horseback. After a lapse of about three years, in August, 1822, he came to Buffalo on business for the house which employed him. His father had died on the seventh of August, a few days before his return, but he was unaware of the sad event until he came home. He promptly transacted the business entrusted to him here and returned to render an account of it. He closed up his engagements satisfactorily in St. Thomas during a fortnight's stay and returned to Buffalo, bringing from both the members of the firm letters which gave a flattering statement of his business qualifications, and expressed for him great regard. The widowed mother, whose faith in God sustained her in all her troubles, went with her son to the store of George and Thaddeus Weed, who were conducting a hardware business under the firm name of G. and T. Weed, upon the present site of the stand of De Witt C. Weed and Company, on the north-west corner of Main and Swan streets. The business was then trans-

acted in a frame building which is still in existence on Seneca street. Mrs. Pratt appealed to these gentlemen with the more confidence, knowing their kindly instincts and unexceptionable character. They considerably read the boy's letters and were particularly pleased with him and his development during the three years of his absence. The result of the interview was the consummation of an engagement. He entered the Weed hardware store in December, 1822, at the age of fifteen, agreeing to receive as compensation for his services eight dollars per month. Six dollars of this sum he set apart every month for his mother. As her name will not recur again in these pages I will here say that this most excellent Christian woman, who might well be designated as a model matron, died happy in her simple Christian faith on the 19th of March, 1862, aged 74 years.

We have now reached an eventful period in the life of Samuel F. Pratt. We have seen the development of strong character in his progenitors under the trials, hardships, and stormy influences not only of frontier life in this vicinity, but also of revolutionary times. We have seen the boy schooled in

adversity, but brought up under the pious teachings of a most exemplary Christian mother, taught to be industrious, painstaking, diligent, discreet and considerate. We have seen him improving all his time, profiting by his school instruction and making unusual advancement. He is now to be put into the crucible of business life in town, under circumstances which will soon determine of what stuff he is made. It is gratifying to know that the sterling qualities which he possessed and which were concealed under a modest bearing were soon recognized by the discriminating gentlemen into whose hands he had fortunately fallen, and that they were not slow to manifest their appreciation by a prompt and generous advancement of his pecuniary interests. His salary was increased each year, and in 1826 a small interest was allowed him in the business, although he was then but nineteen years old. The interest it is true was but a small one, in fact a little better than a salary, or possibly another form for a good salary, but it was alike creditable to him and his employers that it was awarded him.

George and Thaddeus Weed were cousins. Thaddeus formerly lived in Troy. They kept the first exclusively hardware stock worth mentioning as such in Buffalo. George bought out Thaddeus Weed's interest in 1827, and conducted the business for a short time in his own name. In February, 1828, a partnership was formed under the firm name of George Weed and Company, composed of George Weed, Samuel F. Pratt and Lucius Storrs, the latter having emigrated here from Connecticut in 1811. At this time Mr. Pratt's name took its place among business names upon the street, where it has remained unsullied and unblemished, conjoined with the proud appellation of an honest merchant, for forty-four years.

In the following July, Mr. George Weed made a visit to his brother in Auburn, where he was taken suddenly ill and died. In this amiable gentleman's death Mr. Pratt was bereft of a noble friend. The business was conducted for the heirs by Mr. Pratt and General Storrs until 1829, when the heirs sold their interest to Thaddeus Weed, who returned to Buffalo, and a new firm was formed under the name

of Weed and Pratt, General Storrs retiring from the business. March 21, 1836, Mr. Pratt bought out the entire Weed interest. At this time he asked his brother, Pascal P., who was then sixteen years old, to assist him in the store, and in 1842 proposed to take him in as partner. The firm was then made S. F. Pratt and Company. Edward P. Beals, who came into the store as clerk in June, 1836, was offered an interest in 1846, and became a general partner in that year in the firm of Pratt and Company, which has since remained unchanged. In 1852, Messrs. Pratt and Company finding the space which they occupied entirely inadequate to accommodate their largely increasing business, removed their stock to extensive warehouses which they had constructed upon the Terrace, and the honorable name of Weed again went up on the old Chapin corner.

My acquaintance with Samuel F. Pratt commenced about a quarter of a century ago, and with his brother Pascal a few years earlier. The negotiations for establishing an exclusively Saddlery Hardware and manufacturing business in Buffalo, were made on the part of the Messrs. Pratt with Pascal, and were con-

curred in by his brother. The firm of Pratt and Letchworth was established in 1848. I think few partnerships ever existed with so uniformly pleasant relations. In reviewing the long intercourse between Samuel F. Pratt and myself, I cannot recall, in all the discussions growing out of the perplexities of business, one unkind word or even harsh tone. There seemed to be a well-spring of kindness and charity in his heart sufficient to sweeten all the cares of business life. He was always looking on the bright side. Interviews with him for this reason were inspiring. He was inclined to look hopefully into the future; anything unpleasant or annoying he put aside. If he discovered anxiety upon the countenance of another he was likely to lead the conversation after a little into a humorous strain and eventually bring it to the climax of a laugh, so hearty and generous as to dispel every shadow. His laugh was natural, never forced, and frequently had a pleasant after-ripple in it. Sometimes it was so free as to continue until the glad tears would fill his eyes. His sympathies were active and lifted his troubled friend into the flow of his own expansive

nature. I never came into his presence and looked upon his frank, open face, and into his beaming eye, and heard his cheerful laugh, but I felt my own heart lighter, and when I had left him I was inspired as if I had been breathing the fresh mountain air.

In personal appearance Samuel F. Pratt, it is said by his mother, resembled his grandfather Fletcher, except as to height. He (Mr. Pratt) was about five feet eight and a half inches high, and slightly inclined to fullness of habit. His complexion was fresh, giving fine effect to a clear bright prominent eye, of grayish blue. His chin indicated moderate firmness and his lips decision. His face expressed frankness, intelligence and kindness. In conversation he was quick, prompt in his responses and acute and witty, especially when inclined to be critical. The tone of his voice at once inspired confidence and commanded respect. His whole address forbade any attempt at imposition. Mr. Pinchbeck, if admitted to a hearing, looked upon his face and saw at once that he had brought his wares to a profitless market. He was punctilious in the forms of etiquette, and was kindly polite to all. There was a graciousness tempered



with dignity in his bearing which marked him at once as a gentleman by nature. His manners were those of a prince without any of the haughtiness of aristocracy. And though bred a merchant, there was a sense of propriety and calm confidence in his speech and manner, added to other qualities belonging to perfect good breeding, that would have graced the Court of Queen Elizabeth.

It was a most noteworthy feature of Mr. Pratt's character that in his politeness he was no respecter of persons, and in this I detect the Christian element. He was urbane and considerate from principle, the same exalted principle that impelled Sir Philip Sidney at the battle of Zutphen to take from his own fever-parched lips the glass of water and give it to the dying soldier. This principle governed him through life. A few years since I was standing by him and engaged in conversation with him in the store, and a very poor German, a stranger, came in. All the clerks were very busy, variously employed in waiting upon customers, rushing here and there, packing and unpacking. Amid this lively scene the man was bewildered, and after modestly presenting himself

before some of the clerks and failing to be noticed, shrank back quite embarrassed. At last Mr. Pratt's quick eye caught sight of him. Hastily excusing himself from me he went to the man and bowing politely, with his voice full of kindness said, "Well, my good man, can we do anything for you to-day?" The poor fellow only wanted a pound of nails, and it was some time before Mr. Pratt found some one to wait upon him. This was only one out of a hundred, I might perhaps say a thousand instances of like character, which came under my own observation. This principle of love, for it was nothing else, operating through his nature, made him uncounted friends among the poor. He always had a kind word for the humblest, the old and the young, often more precious and more enduring to them than gold. He was not inclined to be argumentative. If the conversation drifted that way, he became reserved until with some pungent remark he would good naturedly puncture somebody's balloon which, perhaps, during his silence, had been blown up into pretty large dimensions. Angry discussions always startled and disturbed him. He would take no part in loud de-

bate. Nor would any retort, rebuff or reproof be uttered, however deeply he might be pained. In one instance a person became very angry and abusive, belaboring Mr. Pratt and everybody else with his undisciplined tongue. His ire seemed to be increased rather than subdued by Mr. Pratt's reserve and silence. The abuser's passion getting at length beyond all bounds, exhausted itself in the wondering remark, "Why don't you get mad? Why don't you swear a little?"

He made no pretensions to friendship, but when trouble came then he was by the side of his friend with a faithful tenderness that touched the heart. Upon those to whom he was strongly attached he bestowed a pet name, which was used in private intercourse. His brother Pascal he called "Parkie," accenting the last syllable, and pronouncing it in a tone of the strongest endearment. The unclouded affection existing between the two brothers, as manifest to me in all the long intercourse I have had with both, has seemed to me most beautiful, and hardly paralleled even in the charming fiction drawn by Dickens, of the "Cheeryble Brothers." There

always seemed to be not only perfect fellowship existing between them, but entire harmony in all business matters. I do not think the elder was disposed to question what the younger proposed. He had entire confidence in his judgment, and left him free to carry out his plans, satisfied that the helm was in good hands. He was ready to give his opinion when asked, but rather shrank from assuming responsibility and business cares. I refer now to the last fifteen or twenty years of his life. Difference in age and perhaps temperament made the elder more conservative, but this tendency was never exercised to check the bold enterprises and varied plans of business extension projected by his younger brother. Samuel, it might be said, was the careful, painstaking, conservative man of business, while his brother exercised his genius to plan, project, to grasp and urge forward with irresistible energy and courage. Seldom are the two contrasted types of character so harmoniously and happily associated as in this instance. These qualities of mind, conjoined with the solid traits of the junior partner, Mr. Beals, made the firm, aside from considerations of capital, very strong.

It is superfluous to speak of the integrity of one who fulfilled in his daily walk so nearly, if not entirely, the requirements of the Divine Law. He was the soul of honor and justice, and one soon felt in an acquaintance with him that these attributes were at the base of his character. When financial panics swept through business centers, bankrupting the strongest firms and shaking every business house to its foundation, then the moral power of this man was like a rock in the tempest, a pillar of strength to the house of which he was a member, and around which the fury of the storm beat in vain.

He was persevering in anything he undertook, scarcely ever relinquishing a project once commenced. He was very systematic and careful. His dividend book with the Buffalo Gas Light Company was an example of neatness and perspicuity. His brother Pascal says, "When I was ten years old he called me into G. and T. Weed's store one day and manifested a great deal of pleasure in showing me their account books, of which he had charge. They were kept by the old-fashioned system of single entry, but it seemed to me then as though I had never seen

anything so neat." He wrote a bold plain round hand. His father's handwriting was round and plain, but more delicate. His father kept his books neatly and in the old-fashioned way of pounds, shillings and pence.

Samuel F. Pratt was not only systematic and neat in everything he did, but was very thorough. His faculty of order was largely developed and he quickly detected incongruities or lack of symmetry. He took pleasure in superintending the erection of buildings and outdoor improvements. Whatever he constructed was sure to be firm, strong and substantial, and while not lacking in architectural embellishment would not be overloaded with ornament, but would be plain and solid like his own character, and attractive from its very simplicity and massiveness. No matter how trivial the structure he undertook to build, he would not permit a beginning until he had seen the plan and well-considered it. He must see not only the ground plan, but the elevation, perspective, and sectional views of the mason work. Not a stone or stick would be laid until the work had been well-considered in his critical mind and the whole approved.

He was never inclined to push himself before the public, and yet he did not shrink from responsibility when he thought his duty called him to act. During the late war he was treasurer of a citizens' committee of three, organized to collect and disburse money for the defense of the Union. This fund was required to be variously appropriated. It was a position of considerable care, requiring discretion, and involving on the part of each member of the committee not a little personal responsibility. His duties were so discharged as to give the highest satisfaction.

He was several times importuned to allow his name to be used as candidate for Mayor by the popular party, when to be nominated was to be elected, but he always declined. He never displayed any ambition for political honors.

He accepted the post of Alderman in 1844. There were then but five wards and ten Aldermen, and his associates were a fine class of men. He attended to the duties of his position with scrupulous care, allowing no matter to pass out of his hands which did not receive the necessary attention. He made it a point to understand the merits of every question,

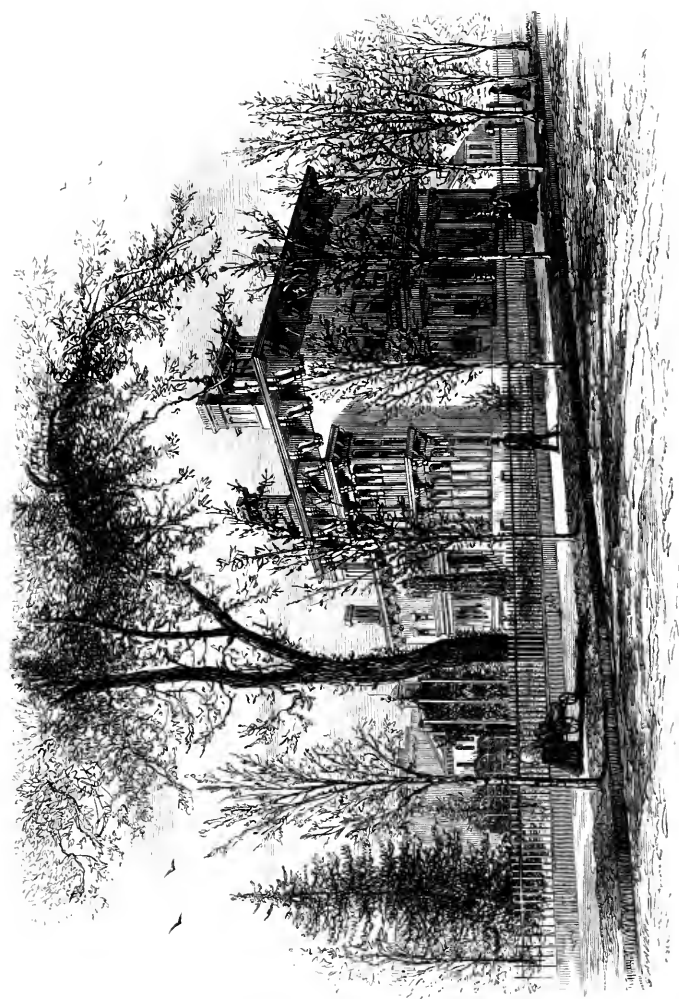
and voted and acted conscientiously in relation thereto.

He was the first President of the Buffalo Gas Light Company, a position he held from the time of his election in 1848 to that of his death in 1872. He invested largely in this enterprise, and worked hard to establish it. He foresaw at the beginning that the erection of complete Gas Works here was to be a great acquisition to the city, and he put forth his best efforts to induce citizens generally to become interested and take stock in it. He even went so far as to say to some who thought they could not take money from their business for this object, "Subscribe, and if you find you cannot spare the money I will take the stock off your hands." These pledges were subsequently redeemed.

He was elected in 1851 first President of the Buffalo Female Academy, and was a Trustee from the time he relinquished the office of President to the time of his death. I am informed by Thomas Farnham, Esq., that when the project of establishing the Seminary was started, Mr. Pratt headed the subscription and labored to interest others. Subsequently,







when it was found that notwithstanding the effort which had been made, the enterprise and scheme connected therewith for purchasing the Johnson Cottage property was likely to fail, he proposed to double his subscription, and by his earnest influence the Buffalo Female Academy became one of the institutions of the city. The real estate then purchased by the Academy for the sum of about twenty thousand dollars has since become vastly more valuable.

Mr. Pratt was a man of simple tastes, plain in his dress and unostentatious in his style of living. His residence was spacious and comfortable, without being grand or imposing. He never betrayed the least evidence that he felt any increased importance based upon his prosperity, or the large wealth with which God had blessed him. He possessed in a remarkable degree that rare combination of mental and moral qualities which, like the balance wheel in motive power, gives consistency and evenness to character, and which we are accustomed to characterize as *good common sense*. He possessed an analytical as well as reflective mind, keenly discriminative and inquisitive in research. He was clear and logical in the ex-

pression of his thoughts and had a retentive memory. These and other mental qualities belonged to him in a degree that might have won for him in other fields of action a more brilliant fame, but none that to his family or friends could have proved a source of greater pride than that he has achieved as an honorable and successful merchant.

He was very susceptible to fragrant odors. This led him to a fondness for flowers, made particularly manifest in his attention to the culture of roses, of which he had in his grounds on Swan street at one time three hundred choice varieties. To these he was devoted with the passion of an enthusiast, and he would stroll through his walks with his friends, going from flower to flower with all the delight of youthful innocence, calling attention continually to beauties which he feared might not be justly appreciated by his companions. A newly discovered fragrance or delicate tint in his favorites would at once throw him into an ecstasy of delight, and as he inhaled the sweet breath and gazed upon the bright hue of the flowers, his countenance would be illuminated with an unusual glow, as though the blossom

reflected the purity of his own soul. His daughters were his frequent associates in these perambulations among the roses, particularly the younger, who seemed to be an almost equal enthusiast.

He was very fond of music, and participated fervently in sacred song as a means of devotion. At the age of sixteen or seventeen he entered the choir of the First Presbyterian Church, and remained in it until within a few years of his death.

He became a member of the First Presbyterian Church at the age of eighteen, Rev. Gilbert Crawford, a Scotch clergyman, being his pastor at that time. This circumstance withdrew him in some measure from the young men of his day. It kept him a good deal retired on Sundays, when not attending worship, and led him into more studious habits. Nevertheless he did not withdraw himself from harmless pastimes. In those days winter sleigh-rides were a favorite amusement, and parties would be made up containing fourteen to sixteen in a sleigh drawn by two or four horses. The horses were caparisoned with strings of large bells that could be heard for miles through the clear frosty air. These jolly youths

and maidens would make the time pass merrily on rapid wings, and not unfrequently, to cap the climax of boisterous enjoyment, the party would find themselves upset in some huge downy snow bank. None entered into the spirit of these occasions more heartily than Mr. Pratt.

At all times during his life he was a strict, though not Puritanical, observer of the Sabbath.

At the age of twenty-eight, in the fall of 1835, Mr. Pratt married Miss Mary Jane Strong, a daughter of Mrs. Delia Strong. Miss Strong had spent a portion of her life up to about two years previous in Buffalo. She resided at the time of her marriage, with her uncle, the Rev. Sylvester Eaton, at Paterson, N. J. She was one of five sisters, endowed with rare personal charms, all of whom had been carefully and religiously nurtured and occupied favored positions in society. The marriage was the sequence of a long acquaintance and mutual attachment, and resulted in a well-ordered home. Two of the sisters, Nancy, now deceased, and Delia, still living, married successively one of Buffalo's most honored citizens, who in addition to other trusts of honor has held

the office of State Treasurer, and at a later period occupied a seat in Congress, where his strong intellectual powers were quickly recognized and his wise counsels and plans for giving strength to the financial arm of the Government were adopted; with what happy results to the nation's safety in its dread crisis, all are familiar.

Mr. Pratt's only children were two daughters, Jeannie and Helen, who both attained in due time to the fair perfectness of gracious womanhood. Both were endowed with gentle and amiable qualities of heart. Their minds were cultivated by instruction and association to a high degree of refinement, and they seemed to be possessed of all those attributes of mind and person which at once captivate the other sex and win the esteem of their own. The eldest, Jennie, had all the gentleness and intelligence belonging to a high type of loveliness, and a blandness of manner inspired by an innocent loving nature, that suggested thoughts of a fair white summer cloud floating gracefully in the faultless blue of heaven.

Helen differed from her sister both in mental and physical characteristics. There was more of reserve

in her manner and reticence in her speech. Strong in the manifestations of her preferences, she was devoted in her friendships and adhered strongly to her convictions. The sisters might be compared to two beautiful flowers possessing equal attractions, but having widely different attributes.

On the 17th of October, 1866, Mr. Pratt, carrying out a cherished design to visit Europe, embarked with his wife, his daughter Helen and Miss Elizabeth King, a sister of his son-in-law, on the steamer *Persia* for England. They had a pleasant passage, reaching Liverpool in eleven days. They passed through England and proceeded directly to Paris, from whence they visited among others the following places: Nice, Naples, Pompeii, Sorrento, Rome, Florence, Bologna, Venice, Milan, Turin, Bordeaux, Bayonne, Madrid, Cordova, Seville, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Tangiers, Malaga, Grenada, Valencia, Barcelona, Nismes, Brussels, Antwerp, the principal cities of Holland, Frankfort, Berlin, Dresden, Prague, Vienna, Munich, and portions of Switzerland, England, Scotland and Ireland. They returned home by the steamer *Persia*, sailing from Liverpool on the first of October, 1867, reaching



New York on the 13th of October. The tour was a pleasant one, all having enjoyed good health, while Mr. Pratt's happiness had been especially enhanced by the enjoyment of the others. During the trip he kept a diary which, although evidently designed solely to refresh his own memory, is written with care and neatness, and is entertaining and instructive. In it he refers to his presentation in Rome to His Holiness Pope Pius the Ninth, as follows: "On arrival at the Vatican we were directed by the Swiss guards where to go, and after passing through a number of corridors and rooms we were ushered into a large waiting-room, from which the visitors were called for presentation to His Holiness by an English Cardinal, Signor Talbot. The Pope received the Americans all at once, and after presentation made a short address. He spoke of the prosperity of the United States, and wished it might continue. He rejoiced that the Rebellion was suppressed, mentioned with regret the death of President Lincoln, and was glad to know that his murderer had been arrested. He closed with his benediction."

In October, 1868, desiring to share with his brother Pascal—with whom so many years of his business life had been pleasantly associated—the enjoyment he had already experienced in European scenes and travels, a second trans-Atlantic tour was planned. The brothers, Samuel and Pascal, with Frederick Pratt, son of the latter, crossed the ocean in a Cunard steamer and successively visited Queenstown, Cork, Killarney, Dublin, Belfast, Giant's Causeway, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Abbotsford, Newcastle, York, Sheffield, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leamington, Oxford, London, Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, Nice, Genoa, Leghorn, Pisa, Civita Vecchia, Naples, Rome, Florence, Bologna, Milan, Como, Verona, Venice, Trieste, Vienna, Prague, Berlin, Hamburg, Brussels, Cologne, the Rhine and Switzerland. Mr. Pratt's nephew remained behind and entered the Geneva University.

From the time Samuel F. Pratt entered the Weed hardware store upon a salary of eight dollars a month he made it a conscientious duty to contribute according to his means to all works of benevolence that came to his notice, and after joining the church (which he did at the age of eighteen), he gave lib-

erally not only to the church itself, but to all the various objects under its fostering care. He always recognized in a liberal degree the claims society advanced for its well being and protection, and gave with no stinted hand. You are already familiar with the record of his bequests, some if not all of these—particularly that to Hamilton College—had been long contemplated and settled upon in his mind.

Although it cannot be said that for a number of years previous to his death he enjoyed perfect health, still he could not be regarded as an invalid. He had always taken excellent care of himself, and was temperate in all things. Dr. H. N. Loomis, who was his family physician for fifteen years, says in regard to his last sickness: "He was very patient and faithful in following my directions, and at all times willing to adopt such plans for his recovery as I thought best. While always cheerful he displayed no levity. Approaching the last he was a great sufferer, but his equanimity of temper was undisturbed, and he was always composed, resigning himself with fortitude to what was before him, and bearing himself up with Christian resignation."

We will not enter the muffled chamber where this good man's life was ended. The final scene, so full of hope and triumph to the Christian believer, has been described in part by one long familiar with his exemplary faith and luminous virtues. But the incidents of love, making resplendent the weary hours of that sick-room, have not been told. The affectionate communion with dear ones, the tenderness of final partings, the characteristic consideration for others, manifested in his latest moments, cannot be portrayed, nor is it best to attempt to reproduce here those sacred scenes.

Samuel F. Pratt died the 27th of April, 1872. Thus was he permitted to precede, by a short time, the sweet spirits of his children into the unknown land of the hereafter. Only five months after the revered father's departure his eldest daughter was called from earth. Jeannie, who was thus the first to follow him in death, was married to William J. King, Jr., of Providence, R. I., in June, 1860. She lived a wedded life twelve years and became the mother of three bright and promising children, and died, sadly lamented, on the 24th of September, 1872, in the

thirty-second year of her age, leaving this interesting little family to meet the struggles of life and the trials of the world without that sanctifying care which only a mother can give.

The following obituary notice of Mrs. King appeared in the *Buffalo Express* of the 27th September, 1872:

OBITUARY — DEATH OF MRS. W. J. KING, JR.—The *Express* of the 25th inst. contained a notice of the death of Mrs. Jeannie Pratt, wife of William J. King, Jr., and daughter of the late Samuel F. Pratt. The loss of one occupying so prominent a position in society, demands something more than a mere notice of her death. Mrs. King was born in this city February 18, 1841. With a mind highly gifted and cultivated, a disposition peculiarly mild and lovely, manners refined and pleasing, she was fitted to adorn and shine,—a bright ornament in any sphere of life. She was indeed a favorite in a large circle of admiring friends and acquaintances. With wealth to gratify every wish, her thoughts were often turned towards those less favored, in devising plans for their comfort, working with her own hands for their relief, and seeking where she could do the most good. In the pursuit of one of her cherished plans for raising funds for the Sixth Street Mission School, at a fair held at St. James Hall in November, 1870, the fatigue and exposure which she endured and suffered on that occasion laid the foundation of that disease which terminated her life. Her sufferings for some

months past have been great, almost beyond human endurance, but she bore them with uncommon patience and Christian fortitude.

Mrs. King was a worthy member of the First Presbyterian Church of this city. Her end was peace. She leaves a husband and three children. Thus has passed from earth one of the loveliest of her sex.

His younger daughter, Helen, whose death occurred a little less than four months after that of her sister, was married to Frank Hamlin of Buffalo, on the 27th of February, 1872, the date of the ceremony having been fixed by her father, who, although in failing health at the time, earnestly desired to see the full consummation of the happiness of his child. The brief joys of their wedded life had a melancholy termination in her death in Paris, on the 17th of January, 1873. She was taken ill on Monday, and died the following Friday. When the unexpected statement of the physician was announced to her by her husband that her remaining hours must be brief, her sympathetic soul in that awful moment, forgetting herself and speaking from the serenity of a sublime faith, said calmly, "Do not be troubled, Frank, I am not afraid to die." Such was the peaceful trust in which this lovely

spirit, standing at the portals of eternity, looked towards the realm beyond. What words from her lips could have given a greater consolation to those who hold her in dear remembrance? They were but another expression of that triumphant outburst of Apostolic inspiration: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

The following appeared in the *Buffalo Daily Courier* of January 20, 1873:

A SAD AND SUDDEN DEATH.—Saturday morning a cable telegram was received announcing the death, in Paris, on the previous evening of Helen M. Pratt, wife of Frank Hamlin, and the youngest daughter of the late S. F. Pratt. It is seldom that death removes in so short a time so many members of a family. Mr. Pratt died on the 28th of April last; his eldest daughter, Mrs. Jeannie P. King, died on the 24th of September, and now comes the sad news from a foreign country that the only child is no more. It was in February last that Miss Pratt was married, and after following her father and sister to their resting-place, she sought, with her husband, in a European tour, partial exemption from the weight of grief which clouded her happiness. It was her hope that change of scene and climate would prove beneficial to her never perfect health; but Providence had otherwise ordered. The particulars of her death are not known. The body will be brought to

the city by the steamer which sails on Saturday next. The heart-broken mother and the young husband have the sympathy of the whole community in their irreparable loss.

Her funeral took place in Buffalo, February 11, 1873, Rev. Dr. Chester preaching the funeral sermon.

It was perhaps wisely ordered that Samuel F. Pratt should have been summoned hence prior to the sad death of his two daughters upon whom he doted with all a father's fondness. Had he been permitted to see the change in his once happy household wrought by the shadow of the dark wing of death, the stricken grief of mourning relatives and friends and the sudden destruction of life-long cherished hopes, he might himself have sunk, broken-hearted, into his grave.

On that dark and rainy day of May when his form passed for the last time across the threshold of his home on Swan street, when a pall seemed hung across the sky and the clouds were silently weeping in seeming sympathy with a city mourning for one of her honored sons, I looked upon the long line of saddened faces peering from underneath a sea of umbrellas far up and down the long street, and



I asked myself the question, "Why is this unmistakable sorrow so universal, pervading all classes, rich and poor, young and old?" The brain that once thrilled electric power from that dismantled dome of thought that we now bear away among the wrecks of mortality has not startled the world by the blaze of erratic genius; those silent lips have never roused to patriotic deeds the councils of a nation; nor did the now nerveless arm ever flash the sword of victory at the head of triumphant legions on the field. Then why is he mourned with something of that same kind of sorrow that was manifest when the remains of the lamented Lincoln were borne in civic state through our city towards their final resting place on the prairies? I said, it is because of his humanity; because we feel that in him we have lost a golden link out of the great chain of universal brotherhood. There is less of love, less of charity, less of sympathy in the world for us until God shall ordain a disciple to take his place. This we feel not only out of our own needs, but the needs of a craving world about us. But is there not some compensation for this loss in our having the complete lesson of his life to profit

by? The history of a human life seems to bear some resemblance to the printing of a book. As the work of composition and type-setting goes on from day to day, it is possible to revise and correct—to smooth down harsh sentences—to make more clear ambiguities and to correct errors. The work progresses until we reach its close. Then each page is locked, the whole is irrevocably stereotyped, the book is printed, bound, and we take it up to read. Even had the opportunity been offered, we should not have thought of doing so before, because at the very latest moment it was still in the power of the author to change something—to insert on the first page or on the very last a paragraph that might destroy the unity of the work or shock us. So with our lives, we may make revisions and corrections of the past in some degree while we still live, or we may at the last destroy a perfect life by some ill conceived act. But at length the hands are folded and the work is done. There is no more setting of type, and mother earth stereotypes the form. We then take up the history to read, and give our judgment upon it whether good or bad. For this I am devoutly thankful, that while

we have lost daily companionship with one so good, we now have his completed life before us. As we linger over its pure white pages, we come to see more and more how great was this character in its simple goodness, how grand in its modesty, and how beautifully complete in its Christian faith and practice. At the same time our souls brighten with hope over the story they tell, and we perceive that the path of life is clearer than we thought, and the way of death less dark.

As I stood beside his grave in Forest Lawn, around which were gathered those who had been near to him in life, by whom he was so loved and whom he loved so dearly—the mother of his children, that only, loved sister, his brothers, especially the younger, who had been so long his faithful business companion—and saw them for the last time look down into the solemn depths of that deep grave and imagined something of the anguish that wrung their souls, surely it was not idle fancy which showed the mists rolled away from the darkened present and cloudy shapes of the future outlined into familiar forms and joined in groups of joyous greeting. Standing there

I again blessed the soul that had so lightened the burdens of my life, that had been always so kind and so loving, not only to me but to all mankind, and thus my spirit prayed: May the airs of Paradise be sweeter to thee than the roses thou wert wont to dally with in thine own garden. May the light of that new day in which thy soul now reposes, be brighter than the morning sun which in summer gilds these sylvan shades where thy ashes rest, and may the loved Redeemer of thy soul enfold thee in His arms with a tenderness greater than that of the mother who nursed thee, or of the wife who caressed thee.

“Green be the turf above thee,  
Friend of my better days;  
None knew thee but to love thee,  
Nor named thee but to praise.”

# MEMORIAL SKETCH.

BY OLIVER G. STEELE, ESQ.

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W. P. LETCHWORTH, ESQ.,

*Dear Sir :* Your note of the 6th inst. is received, in which you request me to give you some personal views in regard to the character of the late Samuel F. Pratt.

It will give me pleasure to contribute anything which will show to his large circle of relatives and friends the completeness and symmetry of his character as a citizen and man of business.

It was my fortune to be connected with him for nearly twenty-five years in the organization and management of the Buffalo Gas Light Company, an institution which is identified with the business interests and domestic relations of a large proportion of our community. It is, therefore, one which requires sound judgment and foresight, and, being exclusively a

domestic institution, that combination of public spirit with eminent business qualifications which should command success by doing justice to all.

The variety of interests to be consulted, the large investments to be made, all with reference to a fair adjustment of the rights and expectations of producers and consumers, makes it more perhaps than any other business, delicate and difficult to harmonize. I had known Mr. Pratt for several years before the company referred to was projected, but had no intimate relations with him.

In organizing the proposed company it was necessary to enlist the influential and strong men of the city, and Mr. Pratt was selected for its president, as the best man of business, and the most unexceptionable in his position as a citizen.

The iron business, in which he was educated, also gave him special value in the construction of works of which that metal is so largely required. In the construction and organization of the works of the company, his sound judgment and practical knowledge were eminently valuable, and greatly facilitated its final completion and subsequent progress. In the

management of the company, his business discipline and sense of responsibility to all parties, were in constant requisition and always at its service.

As a man of business he felt that himself and associates were entitled to just and equitable returns for the investment and risk attending so large an outlay, while he felt and acted upon the just rights of all who depended upon its product for business or domestic purposes.

I feel that it is not improper to state that this was the principle which governed the institution during the long period in which Mr. Pratt officiated as its president.

But what I desire to speak of particularly, is the personal and business character of Mr. Pratt. His position as a citizen, as the head of a family, and as a Christian gentleman, is too well known to need any comments at this time. This was eloquently and justly portrayed by Dr. A. T. Chester on the occasion of his funeral, and by the public press at the time.

I think it just to remark in this connection that, although we differed widely on certain points of Christian doctrine, not one word ever passed between

us which would violate in the least the mutual right of private judgment. My long business association with him gave me the opportunity to know him as perfectly as it was possible for one man to know another. From the beginning of that connection to the close of his life, this intimacy and confidence was unbroken, and is a memory which I shall prize so long as life shall exist.

As a man of business, he combined caution, sagacity and enterprise, with integrity of purpose which no circumstances could shake. No movement could be suggested, or action taken, which involved any sacrifice of principle. When all was correct in this respect, his sagacity and energy were directed in a manner to produce the most satisfactory results. If he failed in anything connected with his extended business, it was not from lack of attention or sagacity. In such cases, his temper was not to mourn over misfortune, but to bear the loss philosophically, and by renewed effort repair damages as speedily as possible.

For some years he had not found it necessary to devote his personal attention to the house of which



he was the head, a younger brother having filled that position with ability and success; but he was at all times a counsellor in its various ramifications, and its present position is a standing testimony of the ability and enterprise of its founders and conductors.

As a citizen, Mr. Pratt commanded the respect and confidence of our whole community. No man could be a more just and devoted husband and father, and no man better represented the good citizen. In all movements for the public good, his coöperation was certain and effective. His fairly-earned wealth was freely contributed to every public object which commanded his confidence. His charities were numerous and liberal, but never blazoned to the world with his consent.

Every public institution in this city numbers him among its benefactors, and every benevolent association received his constant but unostentatious aid.

Such was the personal character of Mr. Pratt as he impressed himself upon me during our long and confidential intercourse, unbroken by any discord. No man who ever transacted business in this city has

left a more perfect record, or impressed himself more favorably upon its industrial interests.

The house which he founded has been and still ranks as one of the great elements of local power, which give tone and character to the business of our city. Would that its success might incite many others to do likewise, and add still more to the catalogue of sound and successful manufacturing establishments of which our city has already so many examples.

Yours Respectfully,

O. G. STEELE.

BUFFALO, *January 20, 1873.*

# IN MEMORIAM.

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## THE OBSEQUIES.

The funeral of Samuel F. Pratt took place Wednesday, May 1st, 1872.

The following description of the obsequies, with the sermon of Rev. Dr. A. T. Chester, is from the *Buffalo Commercial Advertiser* of Thursday, May 2d:

Yesterday afternoon at half-past two o'clock the funeral services of the late Samuel F. Pratt took place at the family residence, No. 137 Swan street, and were very largely attended by the friends of the deceased, his former employees, members of the Board of Trade, and others. The casket—a very handsome and costly one—was in one of the front parlors, the family and other relatives of the deceased occupying a room directly opposite. The casket was adorned with beautiful flowers, which were formed into crosses and other appropriate emblems. A crown, constructed chiefly of lilies, stood at the head of the casket, and a harp of flowers mingled with ivy was at the foot. The features of the deceased were somewhat emaciated, but wore a very calm and peaceful expression.

The following gentlemen acted as pall bearers:

Dennis Bowen, Esq.,	Joseph Dart, Esq.,
O. G. Steele, Esq.,	James D. Sawyer, Esq.,
G. T. Williams, Esq.,	Thomas Farnham, Esq.,
S. S. Guthrie, Esq.,	Hon. N. K. Hall.

These gentlemen, together with Dr. Loomis, physician to the deceased, occupied seats around the casket during the services, which were opened with prayer by Rev. Wolcott Calkins. Rev. Dr. Chester read appropriate portions of Scripture, and then delivered the following exceedingly impressive address:

#### REV. DR. CHESTER'S ADDRESS.

“‘But man dieth and wasteth away, yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?’ We come to this habitation where we have been accustomed to see the genial face and hear the cheerful words of its occupant, but he is not here. He has gone away forever. This cold clay, these closed eyes, that silent tongue, are not to be recognized as our former friend and neighbor. This form, once goodly, while instinct with life, must be hurried into the grave to moulder and mingle with its native dust. This is not he whom we seek. He has gone—he has given up the ghost, and where is he? Oh, who can describe the darkness of the gloom that must rest upon us if now we

had no answer to this question, or if we must remain in doubt about the answer. Thanks be to God, we have the clear voice of revelation. Christ Jesus hath brought life and immortality to light. We need not doubt; we cannot fear. Though we may not follow the spirit of the departed one in its upward flight, though they never come back to tell us whither they have gone, though philosophy strives in vain to settle the theory of another life, though science in its most careful investigations cannot solve the problem, though the sages of antiquity and the wisest men of the present age can only guess at immortality, yet we have an answer perfectly intelligible and satisfactory to the child of faith.

“We do not hesitate to give the answer, while we stand here by the coffin, while we look into the open grave; for we know where he is. Because he was made in the image of God he had—he was a deathless, immortal spirit. The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns unto God who gave it.

“There is another life. We are superior to the ravages of disease, to the strongest power of death. The poor body may yield, but we never. Immortality is our birth-right because God is our father. We live on beyond the dying bed—beyond the sepulchre. The spirit that just now was cumbered with a body subject to pain and needing constant care and nourishment, now rises on unfettered pinions and enters the immediate presence of its

great Original, there to receive forever according to the deeds done in the body. There is no sleep of the spirit with the sleeping body, no annihilation. The conscious soul springs up into its new and unending life as soon as these earthly scenes close upon it. We call it death, but it is the beginning of the real life. This we can say in answer to the question, where is he?

“And we can be even more definite in the case of every believer in Christ. This is also revealed. There is a glorious abode of the holy into which all are gathered who have died in the Lord. The exact locality is not named. Many particulars that an anxious curiosity might seek to know are not given, but yet many things are so minutely described that we have a most pleasing picture of the heavenly world. Glimpses are given, but they are glimpses of that which is most delightful and glorious. What we are told of gates of pearl, and streets of gold, and white robes, and golden harps, is doubtless to be regarded as figurative, but such language means something, and is to be interpreted as far above, instead of at all below, its simple meaning. Everything we are told of heaven proves it to be fitted to be the home of the glowing, deathless spirit, into which, when it has once entered, it shall go no more out forever, but shall be made perfect in holiness and complete in joy.

“Yes, mourners, this loving husband, this affectionate father, this faithful brother, has gone away from you.

You can see his face no more. These walls shall no more resound with his footfall or re-echo with his voice. He has gone forever from your earthly vision. But we know where he is. Even now, while you weep on earth, he is rejoicing in the presence of the Redeemer he had loved and trusted—in that bright abode of the blessed where he is waiting for you. He says even from his coffin, as he said to the aged mourner in his last hours, 'Don't weep—why should you shed tears for me?' Let it seem to you a reality. He has gone to be with Christ, which is far better. It has been gain for him to die.

"To establish these assertions it becomes necessary to take a brief review of his life. Samuel Fletcher Pratt was born in Townshend, Vt., May 28, 1807. His grandfather came to Buffalo in 1804, among the very earliest emigrants. Samuel Fletcher was brought to Buffalo when an infant of a few months old. All his long life, of sixty-five years, has been passed in Buffalo, except that he spent about three years as a clerk in a store in Canada, returning here in 1822, at fifteen years of age. He then became a clerk in the hardware store of Messrs. G. and T. Weed. So industrious and faithful did he prove, so attentive and so skillful in business, that in five years, when only twenty years of age, he became a partner in the house. Before he was thirty he became sole proprietor, and thus laid the foundation of the large and suc-

cessful business, which, with a change of the firm name, has been continued up to the present time.

“In all this he has been an example to young men worthy to be followed. Beginning at the foundation, by industry and economy and the avoidance of the bad habits into which many at the present day so readily fall, he rose step by step until he became one of our merchant princes, a result to be attributed in a large measure to his own perseverance and energy.

“Mr. Pratt had another safeguard. He became in early life a firm believer in and a warm supporter of the Christian religion. He united with the First Presbyterian Church in 1826, when he was but nineteen years of age, and remained a consistent Christian until his death. He was not forward in his profession, but in his quiet and decided way proved himself a sincere and faithful follower of Christ. He was always ready to bear his part in any enterprise that had for its object the advancement of the church or the good of mankind, as his constant and large benefactions prove during the whole course of his life. Among his last thoughts, on the very day before he died, these claims occupied his attention, and in the most deliberate manner he set apart a large amount in most generous benefactions to various institutions in our city and elsewhere.

“Thus has he shown his sense of the claims of God upon him for the proper use of that large fortune which



had been entrusted to him; thus did he seek to be a good steward and use his Master's property for his Master's honor and glory.

"While he was not conspicuous for remarkable traits of character, except those fundamental principles of honor, honesty, integrity and truth, in which he never was found wanting—while the influence he exerted over men was not by noisy declamation, for he was a man of few words, yet he was so free from that which mars the character or darkens the life of so many, as in this to be worthy of notice. As one who knew him most intimately said to me since his death, 'his negative qualities were splendid.' He was especially free from suspicion and envy, and willing to accord to every one around him his proper place. He would not involve himself in the angry contentions or unnecessary quarrels of his fellow-men, but while he had and held his own opinions on every subject most tenaciously, yet he never allowed them to be so prominent as to arouse any ill-feeling among those who might disagree with him.

"He was considerate of those who were in his employ, was diligent in his endeavors to help those who were especially helpless, was willing not only to give freely but to act patiently when it required a sacrifice of time and personal ease.

"So he had lived among us these fifty years of his active business life, associating with us most intimately in all our

enterprises for the good of the community, for the advancement of our growing city. For many years he has been at the head of our oldest Gas Company, acting both as President and Treasurer, and so has he met all these responsibilities, so commended himself by his genial spirit as to win the confidence and esteem of the entire community. He has made no enemies. You never heard any one speak ill of Samuel F. Pratt. This is worth saying, when it may be said in full assurance of its truth.

“In his domestic relations, in his affectionate love as son and brother, husband and father, you whose loss is greatest know best what he was. The silent testimony of your grief is the confirmation of what you are so ready to declare—that he was a model of gentleness and tenderness, fitted in his nature and by his habits to meet every requisition made upon him in all these ties of family and kindred. It is a great loss when such a one is removed from the household. Yet, amid your tears, dear mourning friends, do not forget to thank your gracious God that he was spared to you so long; that for so many years you were permitted to enjoy his offices of love. Such a blessing is granted to but few.

“Take the comfort of the certainty of his happy life with God. How calmly he met the coming on of death. Afflicted with a painful and wasting disease, how patiently he bore his separation from business and his confinement to a sick room; how uncomplainingly he submitted to

every pang. With such a splendid physical constitution and with his temperate life, he hoped to be able to remove his disease and spend a few more years here with those he loved. But when he saw the end was approaching, he yielded without a murmur. With as much composure as he had ever shown in entering upon any worldly business, on the day before his death he completed his arrangements for those noble benefactions already named, consulting calmly with his household as to the propriety of each bequest, and then dismissed forever all thoughts of earth. Then, and to the end, in the few short hours that remained, his thoughts were all of the life beyond.

"He was overheard to say, closing his eyes and lifting his feeble hands to heaven, 'I thank my Heavenly Father for all his favor and kindness to me through my whole life, and most of all that he has given me a well-grounded hope and an understanding faith in my Saviour. That is all I can say. Is not that enough?'

"Tell me, tell me, is not such a hope, in such an hour, worth more than all your earthly gains? He leaves to you and all who have been associated with him in business and in social joys this testimony to the incomparable value of a hope in Christ. He was heard whispering, 'My anchor! my anchor!' and then, soon after, 'Sure and steadfast, sure and steadfast.'

"As the light of the Sabbath morning dawned, one at his bedside repeated the first line of the hymn, 'There's

a light in the window for thee,' he immediately replied: 'Yes, and the window is standing open.' Was he beginning to look in upon the glories of his heavenly home, with every veil removed? We can only know by experience what blessed revelations are made to those who are just entering upon their everlasting inheritance.

"He grew more and more unable to speak. At last he said, so as to be distinctly understood, 'let the welcome precede, let the welcome precede.' What he meant exactly we may not decide. When the departing get so near the heavenly glory they have gone beyond us. But it was the assurance of a welcome. Was it the ruling spirit strong in death, so that to the celestial messengers sent to bid him welcome he would yield the precedence, and modestly, in the shadow of such an escort, enter the heavenly land?

"At nine o'clock on Sabbath morning, just as the worshippers were preparing for the sanctuary below, he went up to begin the ceaseless worship of the upper courts. And if that is in some respects, as we are taught, a service of song, may he not be especially fitted for it by his life on earth? You that remember him as joining so long and so heartily in the choir below, may yet hear him again as with a spirit's voice he unites with the great company of the saved as they sing the praises of redeeming love. God give us all grace so to live that we may be ready at last to join in the everlasting chorus of heaven."

The services at the house closed with a benediction by Rev. Dr. Shelton. Many of those present, besides the relatives of the deceased, then took carriages and followed the remains to Forest Lawn Cemetery where they were interred.

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## OBITUARY NOTICES.

The following obituary notices appeared in the papers of the city:

From the Buffalo Daily Courier, April 29th.

OBITUARY—SAMUEL F. PRATT, ESQ.—It becomes our painful duty to announce the death of one of our most prominent and distinguished citizens, Mr. Samuel Fletcher Pratt, which took place at his residence on Swan street, in this city, at half-past nine o'clock A. M., on Sunday, the 28th inst. He had been in delicate health for several months past, yet not until quite recently was it supposed that his disease would terminate fatally. His friends were cheered with the hope that his vigorous constitution, aided by his perfectly abstemious, temperate and regular habits of life, would triumph, and he be restored to health. His

disease was of a peculiar nature, and beyond the reach of medical aid.

Mr. Pratt was born in Townshend, Vt., May 27, 1807. In the autumn of the same year his parents removed to Buffalo, where the subject of this sketch continued to reside until his death, with the exception of about three years of his boyhood, which he spent in the store of Messrs. Bigelow and Goodhue, at St. Thomas, in Canada.

In the autumn of 1822 he returned to Buffalo, then between fifteen and sixteen years of age, and entered the hardware store of Messrs. G. and T. Weed as clerk. At the age of twenty he became a partner in that house, and continued in that relation until 1836, when he purchased the entire interest of the Weeds, and remained sole proprietor until 1842. At this time he associated with him his brother, Pascal P. Pratt, Esq., which partnership continued up to 1846, when Mr. Edward P. Beals became a partner with the brothers, under the firm name of Pratt and Company, as it now exists—a firm as widely and favorably known in connection with their extensive hardware and iron manufacturing business as any other in the country. Mr. Pratt was also one of the founders of the house of Pratt and Letchworth, of this city, also well known throughout the country. He has been one of the principal stockholders and managers of the Buffalo Gas Light Company, and has been its President from its organization in 1848 to the present time.

Although Mr. Pratt was singularly modest and retiring in his manner and disposition, for one who has held so high a position among his fellow-citizens in the various business relations with which he has been connected, both of a public and private character, his great ability and sterling integrity have been equally marked. Since his early manhood he has been associated with nearly all the public measures of the city having in view the advancement of those religious, educational, benevolent and business objects calculated to promote the public good. All these enterprises he has prosecuted with a remarkable zeal, energy and sound judgment, and has been withal among their most liberal patrons. In 1826 he became a member of the First Presbyterian Church of this city, a profession which he has adorned with a truly Christian walk.

In the death of this good man this city, the entire community and the church, suffer the loss of a high-minded, honorable Christian gentleman, one whose whole life has been devoted to usefulness and beneficence. In his social relations no man among us was more beloved.

Previous to his death, Mr. Pratt made the following noble bequests to worthy public institutions of this city: To the Buffalo General Hospital, \$10,000; to the Buffalo Orphan Asylum, \$10,000; to the building fund of the Young Men's Christian Association, \$10,000; to the Home for the Friendless, \$5,000—altogether amounting to \$35,000. In addition to these gifts, the deceased bequeathed \$30,000

for the foundation of a professorship at Hamilton College. We understand that the bulk of his large property remains in the business which he in life conducted.\*

From the Buffalo Commercial Advertiser, April 29th.

DEATH OF SAMUEL F. PRATT.—It is our very painful duty to-day, to announce the death of one of the oldest, most highly respected, and enterprising citizens of Buffalo,—one who has long been prominently identified with the business interests of the city, and whose loss will be keenly felt and deeply lamented by all who respect an honest man and a true and exemplary Christian.

Samuel F. Pratt died at his residence, No. 137 East Swan street, in this city, at half-past 9 o'clock yesterday morning. His health had been impaired for several months, although it was not apprehended, until recently, that the illness from which he suffered would have a fatal termination,—his family and friends cherishing the hope that his vigorous constitution, aided by his life-long abstemious and regular habits, would triumph over the disease, and that he would be restored to his wonted strength and vigor.

Samuel Fletcher Pratt, son of Samuel and Sophia Pratt,

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\* These bequests were made payable on the first of January, 1880, at which time Mr. Pratt's partnership arrangements with the business firm of Pratt and Company expire.



was born in Townshend, Vt., on the 27th day of May, 1807, and consequently had very nearly reached the age of sixty-five years. In the autumn of the year in which he was born, the parents removed to Buffalo, where the subject of this notice continued to reside—with the exception of some three years of his boyhood, which he passed in the store of Messrs. Bigelow and Goodhue, in Canada—until his death.

He returned to Buffalo in the fall of 1822, when not quite sixteen years of age, and entered the hardware store of Messrs. G. and T. Weed, as clerk. At the age of twenty he became a partner in that house, and so continued until 1836, when he purchased the interest of the Messrs. Weed, becoming the sole proprietor, and carrying on the business alone until 1842. In the year last named he associated with him his brother, Pascal P. Pratt, which partnership continued until 1846, when Mr. Edward P. Beals became a member of the firm, which was known then as it is now, as that of Pratt and Company, a name by which it is celebrated throughout the country, for its extensive hardware and iron manufacturing business.

Mr. Pratt was also one of the founders of the well-known house of Pratt and Letchworth. He has, besides, been one of the principal stockholders and managers—as President—of the Buffalo Gas Light Company, commencing with its organization in 1848. While singularly modest and reticent in manner and disposition, for one occupy-

ing a position of such prominence among his fellow-citizens and in the business world, his ability and integrity were marked and universally conceded.

Since early manhood he was identified with almost all the enterprises inaugurated in this city for the promotion of religion, education, benevolence and general prosperity, entering into all with remarkable zeal and energy, always bringing to bear the weight of his sound judgment, and contributing most liberally of his means. In the year 1826 he became a member of the First Presbyterian Church, continuing his connection therewith until the day of his death, adorning the name of Christian by his truly upright, consistent walk.

In the death of Mr. Pratt the city and community are called upon to mourn the loss of a high-minded, honorable and most exemplary gentleman,—one whose life has been devoted to works of usefulness and beneficence. In his social relations no man was more deservedly beloved. We will not attempt to describe the deep sorrow and affliction which the death of such a man causes among the wide circle of family connections in our midst. Of his immediate family, the deceased leaves a widow and two daughters,—the latter being Mrs. William J. King and Mrs. Frank Hamlin.

We have no authority for saying as much—as we are without definite information on the subject,—but we should not be surprised to learn (as it would be entirely charac-

teristic of the deceased) that he had set aside a portion of his wealth to be expended for benevolent purposes. We venture to predict that such will be found to be the case.

The funeral of Mr. Pratt will take place from the family residence on Swan street, at half-past 2 o'clock on Wednesday next.

From the Buffalo Express, April 29th.

OBITUARY.—We are called upon to chronicle the death of another of our old and substantial citizens. Mr. Samuel F. Pratt, of the well known hardware and iron manufacturing house of Pratt and Company of this city, died at his residence on East Swan street, at half-past 9 o'clock yesterday (Sunday) morning.

It has been publicly known for some time past that Mr. Pratt was in a very delicate and perhaps precarious state of health, and a subject of deep solicitude among a wide circle of friends and acquaintances; still, as far as we can learn, no actual fears were entertained of a fatal result. His strong constitution, noble physique, temperate and regular habits, it was hoped would, with the aid of the best medical advice, carry him safely through, but it seems that his disease was of a hidden nature, beyond the ken and reach of medical skill. It was not, we are informed, until within a few days that his friends despaired of his recovery.

Mr. Pratt was born in Townshend, Vt., on the 27th of May, 1807, and consequently was sixty-five years of age. While he was an infant his parents removed to Buffalo,

where he has resided during his long life, with the exception of about three years of his early boyhood, which he spent in the store of some friends of his father, who had gone from Vermont to St. Thomas, in Canada, and there established themselves in business.

On his return to Buffalo, in 1822, being then a lad of sixteen years of age, he entered the hardware store of Messrs. G. and T. Weed, of the then village of Buffalo, as their clerk. In this capacity he remained until 1826, when he became a partner in the concern. It was here, that by his close attention to business, economical habits and untiring energy, and his strictly honorable dealings, that he laid the foundation of that enviable reputation for integrity of character and great business capacity which he has so long enjoyed, as well as of the ample fortune which he acquired.

In 1836 he purchased the entire interests of the Messrs. Weed in the concern, and continued its sole proprietor until 1842, when he took his brother, Mr. Pascal P. Pratt, in as a partner. Thus they remained until 1846, when Mr. Edward P. Beals was associated with them, under the name of Pratt and Company, which firm still exists and is widely known for the great extent of their transactions in their hardware house, and as manufacturers of iron in its various forms, in their rolling mill, nail factories, blast furnaces, etc.

Mr. Pratt was also a partner in the business house of Pratt and Letchworth, dealers in another branch of the hardware business, of which he was one of the founders.

He has been the President of and one of the principal

stockholders in the Buffalo Gas Light Company, from its organization in 1848, until now.

During his long business career he has been an active promoter of all the projects which have been started from time to time for the advancement of the interests of this city, whether religious, educational, charitable, or of a purely business character, and helped to lay their foundations with a most liberal hand.

For more than forty years he has been a member of the First Presbyterian Church of this city, adorning his profession with a truly Christian walk. In all the relations of life he has been most exemplary, and no one in this community has had a higher social or business standing, or been more beloved. In him Buffalo has lost a high-toned honorable Christian gentleman. To his family and a wide circle of relatives the loss is irreparable, and they will have the heartfelt sympathy of this entire community in their deep affliction.

Whether Mr. Pratt has devoted any part of his ample fortune to objects of benevolence, we are uninformed, but certain are we that it would be in keeping with all his former charitable acts, and we doubt not that he has made a liberal distribution of his wealth. Truly, a good man has been taken away.

## MEMORIAL RESOLUTIONS.

## ACTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL.

At the regular meeting of the Common Council of the city of Buffalo, held April 29th, by unanimous consent, Alderman Pierce offered the following preamble and resolutions, which were adopted:

*Whereas*, This Council has heard with profound regret the death of Samuel F. Pratt, Esq., one of the oldest and most highly respected of our citizens; therefore,

*Resolved*, That in the death of Samuel F. Pratt, our city has lost one of its most eminent citizens and distinguished merchants and manufacturers, whose high personal character, ability, industry and enterprise have contributed to an extent unsurpassed by any other citizen to the prosperity of our city.

*Resolved*, That in the loss of Mr. Pratt, our city has lost a gentleman who, in all the relations of life, has commanded the respect and esteem of our citizens, for his public spirit and liberality to our religious, charitable and public institutions, and by his consistent and unwearied devotion to the interests of our city, in all his public and private relations.

*Resolved*, That the life and career of Mr. Pratt, in this city, furnishes an example of what may be accomplished by energetic and intelligent efforts in building up the character and reputation of our city in all those characteristics which command the respect and confidence of the world.

*Resolved*, That we deeply sympathize with friends, under this bereavement, and that a certified copy of these resolutions be transmitted to the family of the deceased.

## ACTION OF THE BOARD OF TRADE.

At a meeting of the members of the Board of Trade, held April 29th, at their rooms on Central Wharf, the President, Alfred P. Wright, Esq., in the chair, the following business was transacted:

The Chair announced the death of Mr. Samuel F. Pratt, a member of the Board of Trade, in a few appropriate remarks.

On motion of Mr. S. S. Guthrie, it was unanimously

*Resolved*, That a committee of three be appointed by the Chair to draft resolutions.

The Chair appointed Messrs. S. S. Guthrie, Silas H. Fish and Alonzo Richmond, as such committee, who retired from the meeting and after a brief absence returned and submitted the following preamble and resolutions, which were read by the Secretary, Mr. William Thurstone:

*Whereas*, Our Heavenly Father has in His wisdom seen proper to call home Samuel F. Pratt, one of our members; and

*Whereas*, Mr. Pratt has from his boyhood lived among us, and by his industry, integrity and economy encouraged the boy of noble ambition; and by his rare generosity, fair dealing and gentle manners acquired the praise of men; and by his clear judgment, comprehensive views and Christian character won the cognomen of "good and faithful servant;" therefore be it

*Resolved*, That in the death of Samuel F. Pratt, the merchants of this city have lost a worthy associate; our community one of its most estimable citizens; the cause of benevolence a warm friend and cheerful giver, and the church one of its brightest ornaments.

*Resolved*, That as citizens and merchants we deplore his death and shall cherish his memory.

*Resolved*, That our gratitude is due to the Giver of all things for such a life.

*Resolved*, That we tender to the bereaved family of our valued citizen these expressions of our deep grief and heartfelt sympathy.

*Resolved*, That we will in a body attend the funeral of the deceased.

*Resolved*, That the Secretary of this Board forward a copy of these resolutions to the family.

The above preamble and resolutions were, on motion of Mr. S. S. Guthrie, who briefly alluded to the character of the deceased and his knowledge of him, unanimously adopted.

On motion of Mr. A. Richmond, it was unanimously

*Resolved*, That this Board do now adjourn.

#### ACTION OF EMPLOYES OF BUFFALO IRON AND NAIL WORKS.

At a meeting of the employes of the Buffalo Iron and Nail Works, held at the Rolling Mill Wednesday morning, May first, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted :

*Resolved*, That in the recent afflicting dispensation of Divine Providence by which Mr. Samuel F. Pratt, the senior proprietor of the Buffalo Iron and Nail Works, has been taken from us, we find cause for the deepest sorrow and regret, and that we as employes of these works unite with all who have held business and social relations with the



deceased in tendering to his family and near relations our most sincere and heartfelt sympathy.

*Resolved*, That a copy of these resolutions be presented to the family of the deceased.

ACTION OF BUFFALO GAS LIGHT COMPANY.

The following preamble and resolutions were adopted at the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Buffalo Gas Light Company, held May 2, 1872:

*Whereas*, The members of this Board have learned with profound regret that the long and painful illness of its President, Samuel F. Pratt, terminated by his death on Sunday morning last, April 28th; it is therefore

*Resolved*, That the death of Mr. Pratt falls with peculiar grief upon this Board, over which he has presided since its organization in 1848, with the dignity and uprightness of purpose which was so marked in his character.

*Resolved*, That the firm, liberal and conscientious manner in which he has presided over the progress and policy of this company, has commanded the confidence and respect of all with whom it has had transactions, and has always been inspired by strict justice and integrity to itself and to the public, under all circumstances.

*Resolved*, That the removal of Mr. Pratt from among us has created a void which will long be felt by the surviving members of this Board, as well as the community among whom he has been a life-long resident, and his memory will be cherished by all who have known him with deep reverence for his pure, unselfish and eminently Christian character.

*Resolved*, That the expression of respect be entered upon the records of this company, and that a copy be transmitted to the bereaved family of the deceased.

Adopted unanimously.

## ACTION OF THE FARMERS' AND MECHANICS' BANK.

At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Farmers' and Mechanics' National Bank, held this day, at its Banking House, No. 3 Spaulding's Exchange, the following preamble and resolutions were adopted:

*Whereas*, The members of this Board have learned with feelings of the deepest regret of the death of their late Vice-President and distinguished fellow member, Samuel F. Pratt,

*Resolved*, That in the death of Mr. Pratt we have lost an associate, who has been a member of the Board of Directors since the time of its organization as a National Bank, and one whose ripe judgment and varied experience were of great value in promoting the success of this institution.

*Resolved*, That we shall never cease to cherish his memory, for his high personal qualities, and for the kindness of his nature, which rendered our intercourse with him so agreeable.

*Resolved*, That we tender the family of the deceased our deepest sympathy in their bereavement, and that this Board will attend his funeral.

*Resolved*, That these resolutions be entered upon the minutes, and that a copy be sent to the family of the deceased.

BUFFALO, April 29, 1872.

## ACTION OF TRUSTEES OF THE BUFFALO FEMALE ACADEMY.

At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo Female Academy, held May 2, 1872, the following preamble and resolutions were passed:

*Whereas*, It has pleased our Heavenly Father to remove by death Samuel F. Pratt, the first President of this Board, and one of its most

active and useful members ever since its organization in 1851, and our feelings prompt us to make some expression of our sense of the loss sustained in the death of a beloved colleague and friend, whose extraordinary business capacity, amiable character and admirable example endeared him to all with whom he was associated, and made him a most worthy model of the Christian gentleman and useful citizen in every relation of domestic, social and business life, it is therefore, by the unanimous vote of the Board,

*Resolved*, That whilst we bow in humble submission to the afflicting dispensation of Divine Providence which has deprived us of the pleasant companionship and wise counsels of Samuel F. Pratt, the senior trustee and devoted friend of this Academy, we cannot but feel that in his death this Board, the Academy and the community in which he lived have suffered an unparalleled and irreparable loss ; and that as his personal friends and associates in various relations of life it is our mournful duty to place upon our records not only this expression of our sense of such loss, but also our grateful though imperfect acknowledgment of his generous contributions for the establishment and support of this Academy, and of his long continued and most useful service as one of its trustees.

*Resolved*, That conscious that our departed friend was most beloved by those to whom he was best known and with whom he was most intimately associated, and knowing that their affliction must be greater than ours, we respectfully tender to his bereaved family the heartfelt expression of our deep sympathy in their greater affliction.

*Resolved*, That a copy of the foregoing preamble and resolutions be attested by the signatures of our President and Secretary, and transmitted to the family of the deceased, and that the Secretary be at liberty to furnish a copy of the same for publication.

## ACTION OF YOUNG MEN'S ASSOCIATION.

At the annual meeting of the Young Men's Association of Buffalo, held March 3, 1873, Thomas J. Sizer, Esq., spoke of the services and assistance rendered the Association in the time of its greatest need by the late Samuel F. Pratt. He considered that some notice of his death should be taken, and offered the following resolution, which was adopted unanimously :

*Resolved*, That by the death of Samuel F. Pratt, which has occurred since our last annual meeting, this Association has lost one of the best friends it ever had. In the darkest hour of its history he gave to its affairs the prompt, effective and business-like personal attention which characterized him through life, and which was then essential to the continued existence of this Association. His modesty in declining public honors was as great as his industry and faithfulness in deserving them.

## APPENDIX.



## APPENDIX.

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### A.

#### LUCY ANN PRATT.

THE following account of the sad death of this young lady appeared in the *Buffalo Patriot* of May 20th, 1823 :

AFFLICTIVE CASUALTY.—On Saturday last was drowned in Buffalo Creek, Miss Lucy Ann Pratt, aged 18 years, daughter of Widow Esther Pratt, of this town. The circumstances attending this distressing occurrence were as follows: The deceased, in company with three other ladies, was coming in a one horse wagon from Mrs. Pratt's residence about a mile up the creek, to this village. To avoid passing through a slough in the center of the road, the driver, a mere lad, in attempting to pass between the path and the bank of the creek, drove so near the margin that the horse and wagon were instantaneously precipitated down the bank and all in the wagon except the driver were plunged into the creek where the water was about fifteen feet deep. In this perilous condition they would have all perished had it not been for the timely

assistance of a traveler, who being at a little distance from the scene, heard the alarm and sprang to their relief. This humane stranger no sooner saw the danger of the unfortunate females, than he leaped into the water at the peril of his life and succeeded in rescuing three of them from the awful event which seemed to await them. He continued his exertions for the recovery of the fourth until completely exhausted and was compelled to relinquish every hope of success. Who this intrepid and humane stranger may be, it is unknown to us: for amidst the crowd that now thronged the bank, he quietly resumed his journey without affording an opportunity to those whose lives he had saved or to their friends to express to him their heartfelt gratitude for his humane act.

The body of Miss Pratt was found and taken from the creek, after remaining in the water about three-quarters of an hour, and all exertion to resuscitation were unavailing. Her funeral was attended on Sunday last by a large concourse of people who seemed to deeply sympathize with the mourning relatives in this afflictive dispensation of Providence. When we see the aged go down in the order of nature to the tomb, it excites comparatively but little emotion. They acquiesce in the stern decree and seem to relinquish life as having no further claim to it. But when the hopes of youth are blasted by premature death and the flowers of spring nipped by the untimely frosts, when the bloom of life yields to the pale rose of death and beauty, health and vigor fade, sicken and die in the cold embrace of life's relentless foe, it is then we



are impressed with the solemnity of the event and feel our utter inability to scan the mysteries of an overruling Providence. Such it was in the instance of mortality which we have now to record. In the bloom of youth, when hope beats high with anticipated joys; in the sprightliness of health, when the scenes of life are unfolding their charms in the circle of friends to whom she was bound by every endearing tie, she was suddenly removed from life to death; from time to eternity, and we trust from the troubles of earth to the unfading joys of the heavenly world. Amiable and affectionate, kind and benevolent, modest and unassuming, she was beloved not only by her immediate friends, but endeared to all who knew her. But more—piety adorned her youth and added the brightest gem to female virtue and loveliness. She had early devoted her life to the service of her God. While yet in the gayety of life, and amidst the fascinations of youth, she extended her thoughts to nobler themes—themes of another world. And though sudden and unexpected was her departure from life, yet her bereaved friends are consoled by the reflection that their loss is her gain: and though their hearts are filled with grief and torn with affliction, still they rest in confidence that their departed friend is enjoying the beatitude of that world where tears and lamentations can never enter.

It is greatly to be regretted that the name of the “humane stranger” who saved the lives of the three associates of Miss Pratt should have been lost. Such acts are so

rare and stand out so brightly in the history of our race, that we cannot spare them to the darkness of oblivion. This much, however, was subsequently learned, that he was a young man, traveling eastward, having in charge his father and mother. They were walking with him at the time a short distance from where the catastrophe occurred. After the necessity for his heroic exertions had ended, he immediately returned to them and modestly went on his way.

The following poems, having reference to this interesting young lady, are contained in a small volume published by Israel S. Boyd, Concord, N. H., 1840 :

#### TO THE MOTHER OF LUCY.

With the care of thy youth, and the hope of thy age,  
Thy life's sweetest solace, and sunshine of heart,  
In the season most fitted thy love to engage,  
Thou art called—O how sore is the trial!—to part.

The desire of thine eyes was removed at a stroke,  
And joy was extinguished, and hope fled afar;  
But thy Saviour will bind up the heart that is broke,  
And revive the soft lustre of memory's star.

Thou shalt muse on the virtues of her thou hast lost,  
On all which in Christian remembrance endears;  
Till Time the dark torrent of grief shall exhaust,  
And thankfulness spring in the midst of thy tears.

For no wearisome languor had worn her away,  
 No anguish protracted the bosom to rend;  
 In the springtide of health, in the morn of her day,  
 In the freshness of beauty, she came to her end!

While the joys which the hopes of the future impart,  
 Were undashed by the dregs of Adversity's gall;  
 While domestic affections beat warm in her heart,  
 Where grace had breathed over and hallowed them all:—

While her faith in the Saviour was steady and strong,  
 And the hope of salvation shone lovely and bright;  
 While the love of her Lord was her solace and song—  
 She slept—and was borne to the mansions of light.\*

To those mansions of light let thy hopes then ascend,  
 Lone mourner! till life's rapid course shall be o'er;  
 And the mother and child in eternity blend  
 Affections now severed, to sever no more.

BUFFALO, *July, 1823.*

#### TO THE SISTERS OF LUCY.

Blooming on this rude tract of earth,  
 A modest floweret raised its head,  
 And in despite its humble birth,  
 Beauty revealed, and fragrance shed:  
 More full each day its leaves were spread,  
 Brighter became its tints each hour;  
 And strangers as they passed it said  
 They ne'er had seen a sweeter flower.

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\* The pious and accomplished young lady to whom these lines refer, a moment before this sudden and overwhelming catastrophe, which caused her death, was singing those beautiful lines of Charles Wesley—

“Jesus, lover of my soul,  
 Let me to Thy bosom fly,”

as if almost in anticipation of her approaching fate.

But He who knew and loved it best,  
Designed it for a spot more fair;  
He saw its opening bloom repressed  
By the rude soil and sultry air;—  
Of darkly gathering storms aware,  
He plucked it from its earthly bed,  
And set it in heaven's bright parterre;  
But strangers thought the flower was dead.

Sisters of Lucy Ann! her worth  
Must still your tenderest sorrow move;  
Words are but vain to picture forth  
The fondness of a sister's love:  
O, it were all in vain to prove,  
Your loss is great beyond compare,  
Unless you meet in climes above,  
To bloom in stainless beauty there.

'Tis true, you cannot bid, at will,  
The calm of soul succeed distress;  
Hearts formed as yours will cherish still  
The memory of her loveliness:  
Again in fancy will you press  
Her image to your aching heart,  
And dream that from your fond caress  
She never, never more will part.

'Tis but a dream! The light of truth  
The sweet illusion will dispel;  
For in the brightness of her youth—  
But who that tale of woe may tell?  
Dimness that day upon us fell!  
Age shook his hoary locks and sighed;  
And Youth turned pale when rung the knell  
That told us Lucy Ann had died.

Yes, though Affection bade her live,  
And Virtue said she could not die ;  
Though every pledge that earth could give,  
Bound her to life's soft witchery ;  
Even while her pulse was beating high  
With hopes that fill the stainless breast ;  
And health sat sparkling in her eye—  
She sunk to her eternal rest.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lucy is in her shroud !—Her cheek  
Is pale, and cold her ivory brow,  
And mute her tongue. But could she speak  
From her eternal dwelling now—  
As spirits speak in glory—how  
Would she enforce with touching truth—  
“ Remember your Creator now,  
“ My sisters, in the days of youth !”

BUFFALO, *July*, 1823.

## B.

LETTERS FROM CAPTAIN SAMUEL PRATT  
TO JOSEPH ELLICOTT.NEW AMSTERDAM, *December 2, 1804.*

*Sir:* Mr. Spicer has requested me to write to you, to inform you that he wishes to purchase Lot No. 15 in the back street. This Mr. Spicer is a carpenter by trade. He has been in my employ, and has behaved himself like a very sober man. His work is much wanted here, and I should be very glad to have him accommodated. Your advance money will be paid when you give him a "refusal" of the lot.

With sentiments of esteem, I remain your friend,

SAMUEL PRATT.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT, Esq.

NEW AMSTERDAM, *February 12, 1806.*

MR. JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

*Dear Sir:* Your favors of January 31st and February 10th are this moment at hand, and I observe their contents. I wish you to place the lots of land to my account. Lots 100, 101, 102 and 103, as stated in your favor of thirty-first of January, and likewise the lot next adjoining these lots east, which will make five in all. You will observe from the statement of our account, the town orders that I have paid for—and that I have requested that you have your pay

for the lot I live on. In that case I wish you to make me a deed, and forward the same to me. I shall then make calculations as soon as convenient for payment on other lots.

Agreeable to your request of the tenth of February I have sent you six barrels of cider\* by your sleighmen, and taken in their receipts for the same. There are still now remaining in my cellar nineteen barrels more, but the cider is subject to duties and cannot all be delivered until the duties are secured.

With sentiments of esteem, I remain your friend,

SAMUEL PRATT.

NEW AMSTERDAM, *April 16, 1806*

MR. JOSEPH ELLICOTT.

*Dear Sir :* The inhabitants of the village of New Amsterdam last evening met together at the house of Mr. Barker, and agreed to support Erastus Granger, Esq., together with the Republican candidates set up in the county of Ontario, as members for the General Assembly at the coming election. We therefore shall expect you will give us your influence.

With sentiments of esteem, I remain your friend,

SAMUEL PRATT.

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\* The cider referred to probably came from Detroit in vessels by the lake. Detroit having been settled much earlier by the French, supplied apples and cider for a considerable time to New Amsterdam and the back country. From the fact of reference being made to duties, this lot may, however, have come from some point in Canada.

## C.

REMINISCENCES OF THE SONS OF CAPTAIN  
SAMUEL PRATT.

ASA PRATT.

At the beginning of troubles on the Frontier, Asa Pratt was among the first of those who, fired with patriotic zeal, enlisted in the Government service. He was endowed by nature with a strong constitution, and was of a bold and fearless disposition. The Indians had bestowed upon him the name of Tá-yo-nih, signifying wolf. He distinguished himself at the battle of Chippewa, where he was seriously wounded. In this engagement the regiment to which he belonged was handled quite severely. Previous to the battle (on July 5, 1814), they had marched down from Fort Erie. The day was extremely hot, and they went into the fight at once, almost fainting with the heat. His brother Pascal P. asked him afterwards how he felt while in the battle. He said that when he heard General Riall shout, "Charge on those Buffalo gray-coated militia," and his commanding officer sullenly reply, "Charge and be d—d," and saw the red coats advance, he felt his hair begin to rise a little, but it was soon over. The "Buffalo Grays," to which Mr. Pratt belonged, were mistaken by General Riall for militia, and a direct charge was ordered upon them in the expectation that a panic would easily be created among the raw material



of which this class of troops is usually composed. This strategy, however, was unproductive of any important results.\* Asa Pratt was struck by a spent grape shot which lodged in the fleshy part of his thigh. After the battle, he was placed in a canoe (or "dug-out" made from the trunk of a large tree) and was brought up on the Canada side to Fort Erie, and from thence to the Pratt homestead on Ohio street. Here he was placed in the shade of the large Linden tree elsewhere referred to as standing on the lawn by this hospitable mansion, and his wounds examined. The surgeon said to his brother Pascal, "That man's leg must come off." Asa declared that it should not come off. "But," said Pascal, "the doctor says you will lose your life unless the limb is amputated." "Well," said Asa, decisively, "they may take off my head, but they shall not cut off my leg."

He told his brother to send at once for the old war chief, Farmer's Brother, to come and see him. Farmer's Brother came in due response to the summons and brought with him his Mohawk squaw, Sally. They prepared an herb poultice for the wound, which was applied with frequent changes by his Indian nurses, who watched unremittingly by his side during the whole night. When the surgeon came to visit him in the morning he said, much surprised, "Why, you are better." The inflammation in the injured part had been reduced, and the patient was in less suffering.

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\* The "Regulars," among whom Asa Pratt was enlisted, were clothed at the time in what was called "Cadet Gray," sufficient quantities of blue cloth not having been obtainable by General Scott.

The soldier kept his own counsel, as also his native leech, and, what was of more consequence, his leg.

He staid at the Pratt homestead upon the farm until he was partially recovered, and then acted as amanuensis for General Brown in command of Fort Erie. The enemy then surrounding this place had so many hostile Indians acting as scouts, that our soldiers dreaded to perform picket duty, and were almost demoralized upon that subject. One picket post had lost so many of its men that it went by the name of the "Bloody Fourth." So dangerous had become the task of guarding this point that the pickets were selected for it by lot. It extended from the Niagara River to a large fallen tree twenty or thirty rods distant. Asa, instead of shrinking from this perilous service, on the contrary sought it, confiding possibly in his skill as a marksman and his strength and native acuteness as being equal to the emergency. One night as the pickets were about being detailed, he was distressed by learning that this hazardous duty had fallen upon a young and highly valued acquaintance. Mr. Pratt at once asked permission to act as his substitute. This at first was refused, the young man himself positively objecting, but Mr. Pratt followed his request to General Brown with the statement that the incumbent was entirely incompetent for the position, and would certainly be killed. General Brown, who was strongly attached to Mr. Pratt, reluctantly yielded his consent and an order substituting him in place of his friend was given. The fallen tree referred to near the termination of his beat was elevated from the ground and had uplifted at its end an immense

screen of roots and earth. He made a hole in this natural earthwork and through the long hours of the night kept watch, straining his sight in every direction for an enemy, but keeping a special guard through the aperture referred to. Sometimes he mistook the splash of the waves upon the beach for approaching footsteps; and again the rustling of a leaf or the swaying of a branch would be mistaken for the instant as an intimation of a stealthily approaching foe. He had spent the best part of an anxious night, and regarded his perilous work as having been for once safely accomplished. Nevertheless his knowledge of Indian tactics caused him not to relax his vigilance in the slightest degree. As the first gray light streaked the east he thought he heard a slight rustling among the stems and brush that grew up at the sides of the trunk of the fallen tree. In a moment more he detected a certain movement in the brush and faintly saw, emerging and cautiously peering therefrom, the indistinct outlines of a tall human figure. In an instant his quick eye ranged the object along his musket barrel, and as the loud report broke the fearful stillness of the night an Indian tumbled off the trunk of the tree. Mr. Pratt ran instantly around the roots to the trunk to finish his work. He saw that the savage was only wounded, and that he was partly suspended from the ground by his belt which had caught upon a broken branch or stub protruding from the trunk. He made a thrust at the dusky and writhing form with his fixed bayonet, but in doing so missed his mark and struck the tree with such violence that he fell prostrate and quite senseless on the

ground. He had not recovered when the alarm given by the firing of his musket had brought relief. He knew the Indian well, having become acquainted with him in his father's store in Buffalo. Mr. Pratt afterwards endeavored to engage him in conversation on the subject, but he could not get him to speak a word. Had it not been for the circumstance of the belt of his wily foe catching upon a broken limb, the two athletes would have had a struggle which might have terminated the affair less fortunately for Mr. Pratt. General Brown sent early in the morning to know the fate of his favorite, and was greatly relieved upon hearing the result. He hastened to have an interview with the captive. Standing by the culprit he said to Mr. Pratt, "Ask him what he has done with the scalps of the brave fellows he has killed, and if he tells me truly, I will consider what may be done to save his life." The Indian was proof against any such delusive hopes. He knew his fate and accepted it with the supreme stoical indifference of his race, uttering not a word which might implicate, whether justly or otherwise, his British allies. The Indian was bantered and badgered by the soldiers next morning and during the forenoon, and at length was despatched, his body being weighted with stones and sunk in the Niagara River.

There never was braver blood than that which coursed through Asa Pratt's veins, and its quality has since been tested in one of his descendants who served his country during the war of the Rebellion: George Burt Pratt was captured and confined in Libby Prison and taken from

thence to Andersonville, in which place of horrors he died.

PASCAL P. PRATT

Pascal Paoli Pratt, son of Captain Pratt, would be commonly termed "a fine looking man." He was of pleasing presence, frank countenance, cheerful and merry in disposition and very witty. He was popular among all classes and almost idolized by the Indians. At an early period in his life he was Deputy Sheriff of the county. It became his disagreeable duty to assist in the execution of the notorious "Three Thayers" (brothers), who were hanged in 1825. This was regarded as a remarkable event at the time and was so heralded throughout the country.\* He told his sister Mary that the father of the murderers, when giving his sons a last salutation, said in a sprightly manner, "Good bye, Jose; good bye, Nels," but in parting with his youngest and best loved son he put his hand upon the

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\* O. H. Marshall says of this event: "The Three Thayers were *publicly* executed, I should think, in Court street, a little west of the line of Niagara Square. They were escorted from the jail, then standing on the east side of Washington street, a little north of Eagle, by a detachment of military, who marched in the form of a hollow square, with the Thayers in the center, each draped in white frocks, and supported on each side by an officer. Thus they marched in three columns, keeping perfect step with the music, up Washington street, down through the Court House Square—which was then unenclosed—to Court street, and along Court street to the place of execution. I saw the procession from the jail to Main street, and afterwards saw them standing on the scaffold from the second story of a building in the rear of the Eagle Tavern. They all dropped together."

young man's head while tears filled his eyes and faltered out in broken accents a sad farewell. The affection he cherished for this child broke through his adamant heart and showed the human side of his nature.

Pascal P. Pratt rarely missed a chance to have his joke with the Indians, who generally took delight in exchanging compliments with him. Once, however, one of his pleasantries nearly cost him his life. He told an Indian bearing the formidable cognomen of "Twenty Canoes," who had attained some trivial distinction at the battle of Chipewewa, that he was "a great coward." He said this merely to rally the Indian a little, but the latter unfortunately took it as a mortal insult which must promptly be avenged. Mr. Pratt stepped out of the door shortly after, unaware of the ire he had awakened in the breast of his savage acquaintance, and stooped down to pick up some kindlings for the fire. As he did so the Indian sprang upon him and struck him in the back with a knife, nearly killing him. When Twenty Canoes came to understand the case he was very penitent, and remained so always.

Mr. Pratt was present at the time Farmer's Brother, acting as public executioner for his people, summarily dispatched a Mohawk Indian from Canada, who had unwittingly, over his cups, revealed himself as a spy. This occurred a few days after the battle of Lundy's Lane, at a time when the public mind was familiarized with bloody deeds, and attracted but little attention from the white people. Young King, Captain Pollard and Jack Berry, were also at the execution. In conformity with the decree

of an Indian council previously held the culprit was shot on the east side of Main street, below and not far from Swan street.

It was not an unfrequent occurrence for the white people, when they had trouble or differences with the Indians, to come to Pascal P. Pratt to secure his aid, which was always freely rendered. Upon one occasion a merchant by the name of Oliver Newberry had had stolen from him a considerable amount of money, in fact some seven or eight hundred dollars. It was done up in a bundle, and he had negligently left it upon the store counter close to his desk. He suspected a fine looking squaw from Alleghany of the theft. She had heretofore been regarded as respectable. She had been to Mr. Newberry's store trading, however, and he recollected that her shawl had been at one time near this package of money. He was in great distress, for it was a large amount to lose, and his only hope of recovering it was through strategy. He went to Pascal P. Pratt, and on relating his trouble Mr. Pratt volunteered to assist him, although he doubted the squaw being the guilty person, albeit circumstances were against her. He went to Farmers' Point, where the Union Rolling Mills now are, and there, as he anticipated, found the Alleghany squaw. He called her out of the cabin in which she was staying with some of her people and taking her a little distance aside began a relation of the larceny. As he proceeded she became very pale. This, with other suspicious indications in her manner, satisfied Mr. Pratt of her guilt. He then told her quite calmly that he was sorry to suspect

her, but that the evidence fixed the taking of this money upon her. She replied almost as calmly, "If you were in Alleghany I would put a knife in you;" to which he responded, "But you are not in Alleghany." He instantly grasped her by the neck and a struggle ensued more easily imagined than described, and before which it would be as well perhaps in any event to drop a veil. The result was that after various vicissitudes in the encounter he almost choked her to death. Thereupon she made signs to him that she would divulge the whereabouts of the treasure, which she did upon being partially relieved and confessed the theft. Subsequently the money was brought from its hiding-place and handed over to Mr. Newberry.

The Indians had not only great confidence in Mr. Pratt's integrity, but also in his judgment, and he acted as their faithful counselor in important treaties and business transactions. Red Jacket would sometimes come to Mr. Pratt and engage him in earnest talk far into the night, and, returning, spend the whole of the following day in council.

It has been asserted that the Ogden Land Company brought undue influences to bear upon the Indians with a view to securing a purchase and title to their reservation land near Buffalo. Captain Jones and Jasper Parish worked in the interest of this powerful corporation, and tried by every means in their power to bring about a sale, but Captain Pratt's children, particularly Pascal P., in whom as before stated the Indians reposed especial confidence, always opposed this mercenary scheme.



Such was the unquestioned faith these simple people had in him, that it extended not only to their property, but even to their persons. At the time "Old Tommy Jemmy," as he was commonly called, acting as executioner for his nation, committed murder by killing a squaw who had been declared a witch, he defied the officers of the law, and any attempt to have taken him by force would have resulted in bloodshed. Mr. Pratt was asked to go out to the Indian settlement and determine what course it was best to pursue to secure Tommy Jemmy's person. He did so, and explained to the Indians and Tommy Jemmy the nature of our laws, and the necessity of his giving himself up and having the matter investigated by the white people as well as Indians, in order that the whole truth might be known. He accordingly consented to go into town with Mr. Pratt and returned with him to the city. The remarkable trial which followed, resulting in his acquittal, was made memorable by the eloquent plea delivered in behalf of the prisoner by the famous Indian orator, Red Jacket.

This murder, or Indian execution, was committed near the house of a negro named "Whistling Tom," on the creek, where Tommy Jemmy had stopped over night. He killed the squaw early in the morning in a clump of bushes not far from the cabin, and less than half a mile from the Pratt homestead. He then gave a loud war-whoop as he brandished his knife over his prostrate victim. This execution of a witch by the Indian custom is of course shocking to our more humane ideas. But it may be urged as

an excuse for these untutored savages, that they had never enjoyed the refining influences of that higher civilization which perfected the impartial laws of our Salem forefathers, who punished the crime of witchcraft by shooting, drowning, and cruelly torturing not only feeble old women, but innocent and gentle maidens.

Pascal Paoli Pratt died the 24th of September, 1828.

#### BENJAMIN WELLS PRATT

At the time Buffalo was burned, Benjamin Wells Pratt was at Brattleboro', Vt., fitting himself by a course of studies to enter college. The embarrassment which this great disaster to the embryo city brought upon the Pratt family, obliged him to give up his cherished plan of self-improvement. He returned to Buffalo with his mother and devoted himself to helping her in conducting her affairs on the Ohio street farm. He was discreet and industrious and his counsel was valued not only by his widowed mother, but by all the members of the family. About a year after his marriage, which took place when he was twenty-eight, he took up his residence upon a farm in Collins, where he spent the remainder of his life. He never entered upon any active business, preferring the even tenor of a farmer's life with contentment, to one of excitement and care impelled by ambition. He was of domestic habits and strongly attached to his family. With the aid of his good wife, his numerous children were trained up under wholesome moral and religious influences. He

took an active interest in the affairs of the Baptist church, of which he was an influential member, and lived a uniform Christian life, leaving a name universally respected. He died at Collins, 19th of May, 1868.

#### HIRAM PRATT.

After the hegira from Buffalo, consequent upon its burning in 1813, Hiram Pratt returned from Westminster, Vt., to Geneva in this State, and again became a member of Doctor Chapin's family, the Doctor having settled in the latter place for the time. The strong attachment which Doctor Chapin still cherished towards his protegee made him desirous of initiating him into the profession in which he had himself been so successful. In this laudable desire he was seconded by the counsel of Widow Pratt; but the calling was so repugnant to the tastes of an ambitious boy born to be a merchant prince and banker, that he could not overcome his dislike to it, and he said to his mother, "I cannot bear it; I cannot be a Doctor, and I won't be a Doctor." After this emphatic declaration of independence the subject was dropped, and the Doctor regretfully abandoned the benevolent idea of founding a wide-spread fame for this young *Æsculapius*.

After Doctor Chapin came back to Buffalo, which occurred in 1818, an opportunity was offered to Hiram Pratt and Orlando Allen, then both quite young men, to purchase a stock of goods belonging to the Doctor. This they accepted and embarked together in business. The

extraordinary business talents which the two displayed soon built them up a large trade, and led subsequently, on the part of Hiram Pratt, to extensive operations in commerce, real estate and banking. He built the steamers Daniel Webster, Ohio and Governor Marcy, erected the Frontier Mills at Black Rock, originated the Bank of Buffalo, and was concerned in various enterprises connected with the growth of business here. He proved to be one of the most remarkable men of his time, and gave a powerful impulse to the development of the city. He was elected Mayor by the Common Council in 1839, and stood high in the esteem and confidence of his fellow-citizens. The tremendous financial revulsions of 1836-7 broke his spirit and his health, and he died May 1, 1840, aged forty years. His remains were interred in the North street burying-ground, from whence they have since been removed to Forest Lawn.

## D.

REMINISCENCES OF THE LINDEN TREE AT  
THE PRATT HOMESTEAD.

Under the shade of the Linden Tree which stood on the lawn of the Pratt homestead, groups of tired emigrants were not unseldom to be seen reposing in the noon-tide heat, or partaking of a frugal meal, while their jaded teams were feeding beside the highway,—the facilities of the place for a refreshing rest being always freely granted by this generous family. It was under this same sheltering tree that Young King, the distinguished Seneca Chief, had his

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Young King". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop at the end of the word "King".

wound dressed after a serious altercation with David Reese, the Government blacksmith. This occurrence, which resulted in the maiming for life of an influential Seneca Chief, was a noted event in the annals of the village of Buffalo, and created great excitement among the Indians. One of the sons, by an Indian Chief, of Mary Jemison,

the "White Woman," who was then living upon the Genesee River, hearing of the affair, armed and painted himself as if for war, left his home with his followers and came on horseback to Buffalo, and, vowing vengeance against Reese, sought for him here, intending to kill him. It is thought that the testimony taken in the trial which followed the encounter of Reese with Young King may be of sufficient interest to merit insertion in this place. It is furnished by O. H. Marshall, Esq., and is as follows:

The voluntary examination of *David Reese*, taken the 19th day of July, 1815, before us, Oliver Forward, Charles Townsend and Edward S. Stewart, three of the Justices of the Peace in and for the county of Niagara, charged with violently assaulting, beating, bruising, wounding and maiming Young King, an Indian, on the 18th instant, says: As he was walking up on the north side of the Buffalo Creek, on the 18th instant, he met an Indian by the name of George, who asked defendant if he had done his son's trap. Defendant said he hadn't. George said, "you lie," repeated it. Defendant hit him with the flat of his hand, right and left. An Indian rode up, asked defendant what he killed my brother for. Young King rode up, asked him what he killed that man for, made up to defendant and struck him with a club on the head. Defendant took a naked scythe; don't know how he came by it, nor what he did with it. The first recollection he had he lay upon the scythe upon the ground.

*Major Berry*, an Indian, sworn for the prosecution to interpret the testimony of the Indians—George, a Cayuga, says he met the defendant on the road leading up the Buffalo Creek yesterday; asked him whether he had done his son's spear. Defendant said he had nothing for him; knocked him down first place.

*Long Leg* says he was behind Young King when he came up with defendant. Who has done this? Asked defendant what he was going to kill our young man. Defendant says, if you'll get off of your horse I'll serve you just so. Young King struck defendant with a pine stick

over the head ; didn't knock off the hat. Defendant took a scythe from a by-stander's hand and struck King once across the arm. Defendant did not fall after he struck till witness took hold of him.

*Samuel Pratt* says, yesterday evening he was walking up the creek with George Cayuga, met defendant in road and his little boy. Some conversation took place between defendant and George about a spear. George called him a coward. Observed that defendant had a spear. The lie went backward and forward. Defendant said, don't call me a liar. Defendant knocked him part down with one hand, and then with the other, and kicked him. George's brother came along, asked what the matter was. Defendant observed, if he was not peaceable he would serve him just so.

*Strawtown*, an Indian, says, saw a crowd standing by the brickyard ; rode up, saw defendant strike George.

*Abner Pierce*, for prosecution, says he was in company with defendant yesterday afternoon when he met the Indians. Struck George on each side of the head ; fetched him down, then kicked him. Young King rode up and struck defendant, who sallied back, clinched the scythe out of witness' hand and struck Young King across the arm. Didn't hear any words pass betwixt them.

*Zera Sutherland* says George asked defendant about his son's spear. Defendant said it was done. George said, "you lie ;" twitted defendant of swearing. Afterwards he struck George twice with his flat hand ; knocked him down, and kicked him. Rain then came up and asked defendant what he'd killed his brother for. Said he hadn't killed him. Rain said he'd whip him. Defendant said he'd serve him just so if he was not easy. Young King came up and a word or two passed between them. He struck defendant over the head, which sallied him a little, when in about a minute defendant seized the scythe and struck King across the arm.

*Josiah Trowbridge*, for prosecution, was called to dress the wound. Found the arm, near the shoulder, obliquely cut two-thirds through, the bone fractured completely ; thought it absolutely necessary, in order to save his life, to amputate the arm, which he did the same night.

Samuel Pratt, Jr., by his presence of mind saved Young King's life. Happening to be on the scene of conflict, he skillfully bandaged at a critical moment the chieftain's arm with his handkerchief in such a manner as to prevent his bleeding to death. This act created a grateful and life-long attachment on the part of the chief towards his benefactor. Benjamin Wells Pratt held the unfortunate man's arm while it was being amputated. As the operation proceeded and the surgeon's saw grated through the bone, the chief's native stoicism gave way, and he exclaimed, as he hurled a round oath at his tormentor, "Doctor, how you hurt!" Even handed, Young King would have been more than a match for his antagonist. He was quite tall, deep chested and muscular, and had seen service, as his appearance sufficiently indicated. He had lost the index finger of his right hand and his left ear had been slashed; nevertheless, he had a mild and noble countenance. His wife and children came to him during his convalescence under the Linden Tree. When he got a little better he was removed to the shade of some beautiful maples on the Pratt place. Here, with a small fire, and living on fish which the boys caught in the creek, birds which they shot in the trees with their blow or air guns, meal and a little salt, this Indian family sojourned quite contentedly for about six weeks, until their august head recovered from his dangerous injury. The claims for damages growing out of the encounter were finally adjusted by arbitrators in the persons of Augustus Porter, Joshua Gillett and Junius Wheeler.



Rev. Asher Wright says in relation to Young King's Indian title: "The only name I recollect having heard applied to Young King in Seneca was *Gá-yah-gwa'-ah-doh*, implying that he was the *Smoke bearer* for his nation. The duty devolving upon this officer was to give notice of the kindling of the council fires in accordance with the arrangements of the confederate council, or of the Senecas if they wished to convene the general council."



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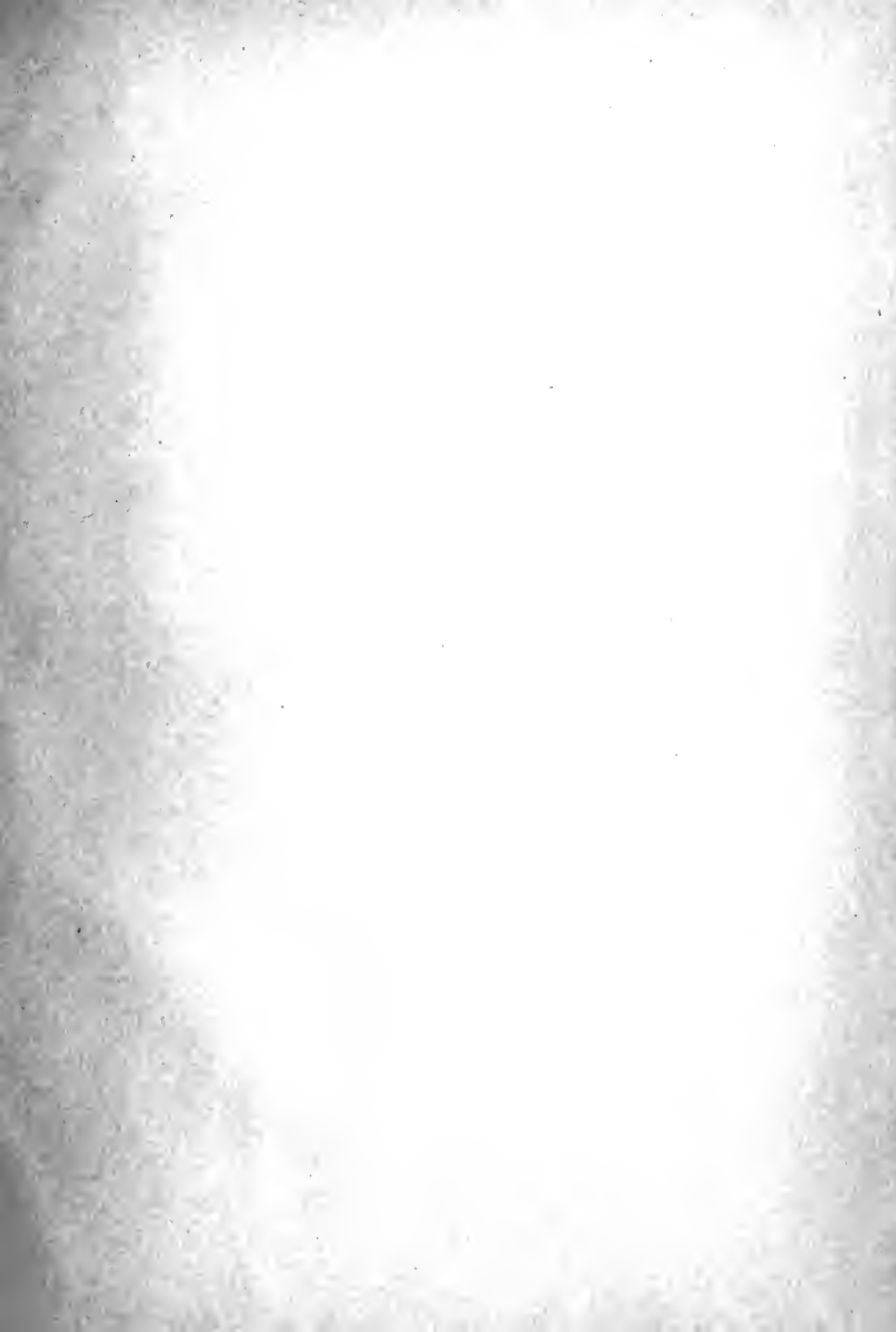
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